

THE  
T R U S T

A  
S E R M O N,

At the Opening of the  
P R O V I N C I A L S Y N O D  
O F

M E R S and T E V I O T D A L E, at *Kelfo*,  
October 17th, 1721.

Preached from 1 Tim. vi. 20.

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By Mr. GABRIEL WILSON, Minister of the  
Gospel at MAXTON.

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Gal. iv. 16. *Am I therefore become your Enemy, because  
I tell you the Truth.*

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G L A S G O W:

Printed by JOHN BRYCE, and Sold at his Shop in  
Salt-market. 1765.

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# R E A D E R,

**I**T is almost as difficult to get an handsome Apology for writing, or publishing Books, as to find a Subject to write upon. The Author of the following Sermon, if he had pleased, or could have been prevailed with to have published it, needed to have been in no Strait about an Apology for his so doing, considering what unaccountable Treatment he has met with since it was preached: But whether he has been more troubled for the Sermon's Sake, or the Sermon for his Sake, is a Question I will not answer.

The strange History of this Affair, if fully written, and set in a clear Light, would scarcely be believed by Posterity: And if a fair Account were given of the Methods of Procedure, Remarks, Answers, Speeches, and other Papers relative thereto, it would far exceed the Bulk of the Sermon itself. But whether the Public shall ever have the History of these Things, or if it shall be thought more adviseable to bury them in everlasting Silence and Oblivion, I am not concerned to tell at this Time. Mean while, the Reader must know, that the Author has now stood a Pannel before four Synods, and as many Committees of that Synod, and yet they have not judicially found the Sermon guilty of any Error, or erroneous Expressions. It was brought before the Commission of the Church in November last, by Ways and Means, which, to the Conviction of all that heard of them, were not so very laudable. The Commission, at that Time, did nothing in it, but committed it to some for its further ripening against March: That Committee did as little in it, but referred it back to the Commission. When March came, the Commission, without giving any Judgment on it, left it intirely on its first Southern Dress, and transmitted the whole Process to the next General Assembly, as it came from the Synod of Mers and Teviotdale; and the Author is cited to the Assembly.

And thus, *per varios casus*, the Sermon is to be before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a Court, a greater than which, Christ, as King and Head of his Church, hath not this Day upon Earth, a Court where Justice, in

behalf of Truth, her Friends and Votaries, is expected, and, I doubt not, will be had; and that will not suffer themselves to be imposed upon after this. Now, that every Member of that Venerable and Honourable Body, may see with his own Eyes, without taking Things on Trust, at second Hands, and so may not Vote from the Report, or upon the Faith of any Committee whatsoever, is, so far as I know, one of the Designs of publishing the Sermon at this Time, and which the Author himself has no Hand in; and therefore, whatever Errors or Mistakes of the Press may be found therein, they are not to be in the least imputed to him.

No Person need to question the Genuineness of the Sermon: For the Committee of the Synod, appointed to collate the Copy with the Notes, reported they had a faithful Transcript of them; nor was it ever surmised by its greatest Adversaries, that there was any Thing amissing in the Copy given in, that was delivered in the Sermon.

That the Reader may the better understand what is before him, he would know, That the Committee of the Synod of Mers and Tiviotdale, after they had got the Author's Papers from him, did drop their Calumnious Condescendence, and drew up a Charge consisting of Twelve Remarks, Twelve Questions, and Twelve Slanders: For you must know, by the by, that the Number *Twelve* is what some wanton Kirkmen have taken Pleasure to sport themselves with of late, tho' some of them have discovered how ridiculously straitned they have been to find their Account. Now the Reader has these Passages upon which the Remarks, Questions and Slanders are founded, exactly marked out to them with an Asterisk (\*) at the Beginning, and a Dagger (†) at the close of the Passage. Know also, that several Passages were reduced by the Committee to one and the same Remark; and hence it is, that the same Number of the Remark will be found affixed to several Places of the Sermon.

The Author being far from suspecting that his Notes would be demanded of him, the Thing being so rare and unprecedented, no wonder he was secure, and that the Reverend Synod came upon him napping, and that his Papers were not every Way so well prepared for seeing the Light, as otherwise they might and would have been; neither was he at Liberty to alter any Inaccuracy of Stile or Phrase, might be

be here and there in the Discourse, he having engaged, as he was required, to give in a faithful Copy of his Notes, as they stood when he preached the Sermon, which was accordingly done: therefore the Reader would be informed, that several Pieces of the Method that were blank in the Notes, and are here filled up, that all the Enlargements, and even the Supply of deficient Words, the Author had slipped in writing his Notes, are distinctly marked with inverted Commas at Beginning and End; and with all these Helps, every one is left to the best Improvements of his Talent of Invention, to spy and spell out the imaginary Heresy of this so much tossed and persecuted Sermon.

Reader, the Book is yet to be written, and the Sermon to be preached by any, not infallibly inspired, that can escape the Censure of every Man. It is easier, by far, to find Fault with other Mens Works, than for ourselves to perform any Thing that deserves Commendation: one would think, a due Sense of our own Weakness should make us bear with that of others, where no Wickedness is intended: but we see it otherwise, and that every Man's Understanding has its own peculiar Taste, whereby it both censurcth other Men, and valueth itself. And therefore, it needs not seem strange, that this Sermon has met with such Treatment from some, who would do well to consider, whether they have accused the Author more falsely, or themselves most justly, by their Conduct in this Affair, from first to last, the grievous Oppression in Body, being tossed from Synod to Committee, and from Committee to Synod, from thence to the Commission in the Time of Winter, and again in March; the Vexation and Grief of Soul, for a Man to have his good Name as it were, posted up and pillorized before the World, without the least Regard to his sacred Function and Character, or to the Hindrance it gave him in the Exercise of his Ministry, beside what Advantage the Devil's Interest has got thereby, are Things that cannot well be accounted for, either to God, or his People. For, though the World is, and will still be like itself, in dealing its Blows and Benefits at Random, and frequently giving the worst Entertainment to the best deserving; yet the Churches of Christ ought to have no such Custom.

It is none of my Province to commend the Author, or recommend his Performance; and I am sure, it is as little my Design



Design to claw the Reader with the Titles of candid, courteous, or gentle, thereby to procure his good Acceptance of it; yet this I may say, the Sermon has already met with more ungentle and uncourteous Readers, than it can ever meet with again, if it keep out of the Hands of profane and avowed Enemies to Truth and Godliness.

There remains a Question or two, that I would gladly be resolved in, before I bid the Reader farewell.

One is, If a Minister of Jesus Christ be bound by any Law to deliver up his Papers, which he knows are required, in order to be improved against himself? The Reason of the Question is, because I have heard it said, That Judges are to proceed *Secundum Allegata & Probata*, and what they hear not they are not to be Judges of: for, put the Case, that a Minister's malicious Enemy should turn dull and heavy-headed in Time of Sermon, and, half sleeping, half waking, he should dream, that he had heard some Things that do not agree with his Way of thinking; is the Preacher obliged to gratify that Man's Humour, by refreshing his Memory with his Notes, and to let them be tossed and teased by every faucy *Dominus fac Totum*? The Rarity of the Demand seems to prove the Absurdity of it. But I would willingly hear the Sentiments of unbiaſſed Lawyers and Divines on the Head: and I believe, as our Times are like to go, there may be as impertinent and useleſs Questions, not only in *Summa Thomæ*, but even among our own Astronomical Divines at home, who teach the Probability of a World in the Moon, and the like lunatic Lucubrations.

Another Question is, What would our worthy and zealous Reformers say, if they were to see this Sermon brought in a Pannel before a General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and the Preacher accused for Hereſy and Slander? What would these honest Men say, who made that Act, August 3, 1648, for Censuring Ministers for their Silence, and not speaking to the Corruptions of the Time? Would some Men in the Synod of Mers and Teviotdale have got Thanks of that House in those Days, for the great Pains they have put themselves and others unto in the whole of this Affair? The Reason why I propose this Question is, because I read in a Sermon of Mr. Robert Bruce's, some Nine Years after he entered the Ministry in the City of Edinburgh, and neither doating by reason of old Age, nor

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d away by that which some would call the intemperance of young Zeal, but in the Two and Forty Year of his or thereby, preaching upon the 51st Psalm, among Things, he speaks in these Words, as they are recorded in Calderwood, Hist. P. 366, 367.—“ It putteth the Cape-Stone, that so many of our own Brethren could not be so faithful, as their worthy Calling, and the Dignity of this Cause craveth. Fy upon false Brethren! to see them dumb now, so faint-hearted, when comes to the Choke. Not only are they ashamed to speak the Thing they think, which is a Shame in a Pastor, but speak directly against their former Doctrine, Oath and Subscription. We have ever been praying for Planting, but never for good Planting; I had rather have the sincere Heart planted, that is brought out of Nature, by the Work of the Spirit of Grace, than Twenty or Hundred of these fine Counterfeits, for all their Learning. These Men are the Wreck of our Kirk. They will speak the Truth a while, till they be put at, but incontinent they will turn, and make their Gifts Weapons of fight against Christ and his Kingdom: for there is none so malicious as an Apostate, when he begins to slide back, &c.”

Another Instance of faithful and plain Dealing, which is in Use among the honest Ministers of this Church in the Year of Old, I shall give from Mr. Row's Manuscript History concerning Mr. Patrick Simson, Minister at Stirling, a learned, holy, and straight Man, of whom some extraordinary Things are recorded in the Fulfilling of the Scripture. Being a Man very meek and modest, the Court showed him a greater Respect for him, than for any other of the Ministers, who bore Testimony against their Declensions and Corruptions. He happening to preach before King James, in the Year 1592 after the vile Murder of the Earl of Murray Huntly, who, to say no worse, was connived at by the King, in that Affair. When Mr. Simson came to apply his Text, Gen. iv. 9. *Where is Abel thy Brother?* He said to the King publickly, Sir, I assure you in God's Name, the King will ask at you, Where is the Earl of Murray your Brother? Unto which the King answered, Mr. Patrick, my Chamber-door was never steeked upon you, you might have said me any Thing you thought in Secret. To which Mr. Simson

son replied, Sir, the Scandal is public: And being sent for to the Castle after Sermon, he went with his Bible under his Arm, saying That would answer for him.

Now, what for Slanderers would these, and many others like them, eminent for Faithfulness and Honesty, be reputed, if they were alive, and speaking or acting so in our Day? What Imprudence at best, if not Impudence, would some Flatterers judge them guilty of? But Wisdom will at length be justified of her Children. As God's Blessing on Honesty and plain Dealing, brought this Church from very small Beginnings, to a high and honourable Pitch of Reformation; so we have Ground to fear, that Unfaithfulness in the Matters of God, may, at length, bring us back to little better than nothing.

Though the Reader may think the Sermon long, as it now stands, yet he is not to imagine, that it was all delivered; for several Things in the Notes were past, for the sake of Time. The Author's Inclination was, That Church Judicatories should first have said all their Pleasure of it, before it should be printed; others thought that Modesty was culpable; in regard it could be no Dissatisfaction or Displeasure to the Members of Assembly, but good Service rather, to have under their View what they are to judge of: and therefore a Way was at length found for publishing it, without asking his Consent.

Now, with Respect to all that has followed, or may follow upon the Sermon, I shall conclude with a Sentence of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in their Supplication to King Charles the 1st, dated November 21st, 1638. But our Comfort is, That Truth is the Daughter of Time; and although Calumny often starteth first, and runneth before, yet Verity followeth her at the Heels, and possesseth herself in noble and royal Hearts, where base Calumny cannot long find Place.

If any should think my Questions, and the Reasons of them impertinent, for such learned, wise and prudent Times, as these we now live in, I cannot help it: only, I am afraid the Answers to them, from some will be as impertinent, till the Times grow better than they are like to be. Meanwhile, Reader, as long as we are good Friends, I crave Pardon for what is wrong said in this Epistle, and so, till a new Occasion offer, Farewell.

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# The T R U S T.

ERMON at the opening of the Synod of  
*Mers and Teviotdale.*

. vi. 20 *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy Trust, avoiding profane and vain Babbling, and Opposition of Science falsely so called.*

THE Apostle having, in the Entry of this Epistle, Ver. 18. in the Words of a like weighty Import, these, address'd the Man of God he was writing to, having frequently, in the Course of it, renewed the Intimation, he comes, the more deeply, to imprint the Sermon on his Heart, to conclude the whole after the same manner, giving him in a few Words, the Sum and Import of what he had been saying. *O Timothy, keep, &c.* Which he adds as a Seal to his Letter, the better to secure all intimations, as sacred and inviolable.

These Words, we have, 1st, A warm and pathetic Exhortation made to the Man of God. *O Timothy, keep that committed to thy Trust.* 2d, A necessary Caution given him, that he'd fulfil the former Demand, to beware of, and avoid what he is here advertis'd of: namely, *profane and vain Babblings, and Oppositions of Science falsely so called.* The former Part of the Words, namely, the Address, we have "Four Things plain enough."

A Deed of Trust alledged or supposed: *That which is committed to thy Trust.* All which is, in the Original, express'd in one Word. The Latin also has a Word that corresponds to it, viz *Depositum*: but our Language has not, I know of, any one Word expressive and significant enough to translate it by. That which comes nearest to it, is a TRUST. Scarce any Body but they know, what a Trust, in the General is, namely, something put into the Hands or Custody of another, to be secured and im-

proved, as the Nature of the Thing requires, and to be returned in due Time, when it shall be called for. It suppose a Confidence of the Person's Fidelity, to whom we commit the same; that they will deal honestly by us, not embezzle nor suffer to perish, but preserve it safe and entire.

Neither is it hard to find what that particular Trust is, the Apostle here means. "It is not Timothy's own Soul, nor the Gifts and Talents bestowed on him; nor any particular Flock committed to him, much less was it unwritten Traditions, as some of the Popish Writers allege; none of these, I say, are the Trust here pointed at." But \* it is, we need have no Doubt of it, the same that was committed to the Apostle's own Trust, Chap. i. 2. *The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my Trust.* The same he had committed to Timothy, Ver. 18. under the Name of a Charge, Message, or Denunciation; the Word being one with that rendered Commandment, Ver. 5. The End of which is Charity (all which is not meant of the Law, but of the Gospel. For the Word *Oaragtelia* signifies all such Orders or Commands, as one receives from a Superior, to deliver them in his Name to others.) It is the same Trust, he puts him again in Mind of, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. where the Word in the Original, is one with this in the Text.

Yea, his Meaning (according to an usual Saying of the Jews, *Nulla est Objectio, in Lege quæ non habet Solutionem in Latere, i. e.* whatever Difficulty attends a Phrase, considered alone, it may be resolved, by observing what borders upon it) is evident from the Words immediately following: for it is somewhat, to which the *Profane and vain Babblings*, &c. were contrary and which they intended to corrupt and make of none Effect: which could be no other than the Gospel of Christ, particularly the Doctrine of it, these divine, glorious Truths, revealed by our Jesus Christ to his Apostles, and by them preached and published to the World. This Trust was the Mark, they who gave heed to, and professed these *vain Babblings and Oppositions of Science*, missed or erred concerning which the following Verse tells us, was the Faith.

The

\* Remark I.



The Jews speak of two great sacred *Depositums*, or Trusts, God has committed to the Sons of Men, namely, the *Lamp which is in us*, or the SOUL, and the *Lamp without us*, which is the LAW, or as one of themselves expresses it, the *Depositum* of the divine Mysteries: for they commonly used the Word Law, to express the whole of the divine Revelation by. Of these Two, they bring in God speaking to Man, thus, *My Lamp is in thy Hand, and thy Lamp, which is thy Soul, is mine: if thou extinguish mine, I will put out thine.* Whether the Apostle here alludes to this their Way of speaking; which did not want a Foundation in the Scriptures, I will not determine: but both these *Depositums* we find him making mention of, in his Epistle to Timothy, and expressing them by one and the same Word, namely, *Oaraktatheke*. The same the Jews, "When they wrote in Greek," made Use of to that Purpose. The Soul or the Lamp within us, he so expresses. 2 Tim. i. 12. — *That he is able to keep "my Depositum, or," That which I have committed to his Trust,* &c. The Lamp without us, or the *Depositum of the Divine Mysteries*, we have called by the same Name, here in the Text, and likewise, 2 Tim. i. 13, 14. *Hold fast the Form of sound Words, — That good Thing, which was committed to thy Trust, keep* &c. "And thus indeed it is, "not only betwixt Christ and Ministers, but between him "and every Believer; they mutually trust one the other, "they him with their Souls, and he them with his Truths." A great and goodly Trust indeed, as ever the Sons of Men could have been honoured with

II. To whom this Trust is committed, namely, to Timothy, though not to him singly and alone: for Timothy is pitched upon and singled out by the Wisdom of God; to be a Pattern and Example unto, and Instructions given him in Name of Gospel-Ministers, in succeeding Generations. The Spirit of God continues to speak to us the same Thing, and by the same Words, that were at first directed to him: yea, by these Words will the Holy Ghost be speaking to every one that bears Office in the House of God, the End of the World. To him then, and to every Minister of the New Testament, is this Trust committed.

There are, besides Christ himself, in whom dwell all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Three Repositories,

as one observes, of Divine Truth, or of the Mysteries of the Gospel, the holy Scriptures, the Mind or Hearts of Believers, and the Gospel-Ministry of the present Age —

In the *First*, God preserves Gospel-Truth by his Providence: there they have been and shall be kept safe, against all the Oppositions of Devils and Men, to the End of the World. The Lord will never leave his Church to the uncertain Conduct of unwritten Traditions, or private Enthusiasm, destitute of this Pillar of Cloud and of Fire, while she sojourns in a Wilderness. The Word and the Spirit shall never leave her, till she is fairly entered Immanuel's Land, where the Glory of God, and the Lamb, shall be her Light for ever and ever. And since this Well of living Water shall never run dry, whatever Losses, with respect to Truth, the Church may otherwise sustain, they may from hence be all of them well supplied: whatever Decays or Corruptions the Church may fall under, this Mean and Rule of Reformation still remains. And accordingly, by Means of it, has the Faith of the Church, when quite almost extinct, been often brought again as from the Dead; by Means of it, have the Profession and Power of Godliness, when lost from among the Sons of Men, been recovered to Life again. From this Well of Salvation, Men, using the appointed Means, may draw living Water abundantly, and with Joy, go Matters in the World as they will.

In the *Second*, God, according to his Promise, John vi. 45. and 14. 16, 26. and 16. 13. 1 John 2. 20. preserves the precious Trust, by his Spirit and Grace; even sometimes in the Case of great and general Apostasies; or under the Defect of a public Ministry: as it was in the Days of Elijah, when Seven Thousand hidden Ones were preserved in the Faith and Fear of God, without bowing of the Knee to Baal.

In the *Third*, he preserves his Truth, as in a sacred Ordinance of divine Institution, for that very Purpose. It is committed to the Ministry, with Reference mainly to the great Ends of publick Profession, Manifestation and Edification. And, on the faithful Discharge of their Office, do the Glory, Power and Purity of it in the World, much depend. The precious Treasure and Trust is, for a Time, put into these earthen Vessels, not to be hid and concealed, but even as a Candle is put into a Candlestick, to be by them carried

carried and dispersed up and down the World; to shine and flow forth of their Lips and Lives, for the Relief and Comfort of lost Sinners of Adam's Family.

III. The Charge or Injunction that's given concerning it. They are to keep it; to observe, watch, guard and defend it, as the Shepherd does his Flock, as the Soldiers does his Post: for all these the Word signifies. This Trust is committed to Ministers, not to be by them refined upon, embellished, new modelled, or perfected, but only to be kept, used and improved, as they received it. The Law of a Trust, bars all adding to it, or taking from it, all disjointing or new framing of it, and binds, with Care and Exactness, to preserve it inviolable, as a Thing most sacred, in the same Condition it was delivered them. If they keep what is delivered them, and as it was delivered, they have acquit themselves, discharged their Duty, and shall be approved: but if they once imagine the Doctrine of the Gospel stands in any the least need of being moulded a-new by human Wisdom, or of receiving any Thing from Men, be they of what Sort they will, Councils, Fathers, &c. instead of doing him Service, they are guilty of one of the greatest Affronts and Indignities against the Son of God, the glorious Author of it, and so of Male Administration, and Treachery in their Trust.

This Charge to keep the Trust, supposes, (1.) That it is valuable, and well worth looking to. (2.) That, on many Accounts, it needs looking to. It is of such a spiritual and sublime Nature, that we may easily lose Sight of it, let it slip from us, and then take up with somewhat else in Place of it. Devils and Men will be Way-laying us, to rob us of the Trust: Fraud and Force will, both of them, be employed to make us quit of it, or unfaithful in it. (3.) The keeping of it requires, as we may see afterwards, much Wisdom and Knowledge, Care, Watchfulness, Diligence, and Integrity in the Trustee.

IV. The Manner of Address, or Way of giving this Charge, deserves our particular Notice. The more thoroughly to waken his Attention, and that he might, with both Softness and Efficacy, bear what he was to lay home into his very Heart, he calls him by his Name; and not only so, but, *O Timothy, keep, &c.* What a Vehemence of Affection and Concern we have here? He, by these Words,  
breaths



breaths forth the most tender Affection, together with the greatest Earnestness.\* They are Words not of mere Authority, Terror or Severity, that being none of our Lord's Way with his Children and Servants; without they have sought it sore at his Hand: but Words of Intimacy and Familiarity; they are Words of Expectation and Confidence; they are Words of great Weight and Solemnity.

Now, this solemn and Pathetic Manner of exhorting, and laying upon Timothy, and every one of us, this Charge, intimates to us these Four Things.

1. The great Moment and Importance of the Trust committed, together with the great Necessity of a faithful Discharge of what is required, with Reference to it. The Glory of God in the World, and the Salvation of Souls, are both of them much at Stake, being so closely conjoined with Timothy's keeping of this Trust. Without this Trust be duly minded, a Church will soon cease to be the Pillar and Ground of Truth. *O Timothy, keep, &c.*

2. The great Difficulty there is in this Matter. It is what will require the greatest Industry and Watchfulness: it will be a Labour, a hard Labour, yea, a Warfare to a Man all his Days, to keep the Trust in the Sense of the Text. However common and easy a Matter some may suppose it, and others make it to themselves, it was, we see, a great and difficult Matter, in the Apostle Paul's, yea, in the Holy Ghost's Account. *O Timothy, keep, &c.*

3. A Proneness and Readiness even in the best (to say nothing of others) through Inadvertency, Sloth, the Influence of various Lusts and Tentations, to fail in the Discharge, to prove unfaithful in the Management of this Trust. Timothy was not only himself a real Believer, but singled out by the Holy Ghost, pointed out by particular Prophecies to the Work of the Ministry; endowed with extraordinary Gifts privileged with an extraordinary Presence and Assistance of the Spirit of God: yet was there need, not only by Word, but also by Writ, to stir him up, warn, exhort, beseech and charge him again and again, as to this Matter. Which might be a sufficient Apology, if one was needful, for reading such a Text before Ministers. *O Timothy, —*

\* *Quest. 5.*

4. The



4. The great Danger of a Miscarriage here. Great Danger to the Man himself, who has the Trust in keeping, great Danger to others, for whose Sake it is committed to his keeping.

In the *Second Part* of the Verse, which is dissuasive, the Man of God is warned to avoid, 1. Some kind of Words.

2. Some Sort of Things.

1. The Words, he is to avoid, are *vain and profane* ones; the same that he is again, 2 Tim xi. 16. advised to shun. By *vain Babblings* ("which makes but one Word in the Original, viz, *Kenophonia*, and by the Variation of little more as one Letter, *Kenophonia*; and so some have inclined to read it, though without either Warrant or Necessity, especially since the former includes the latter") noisy and clamorous Sounds in speaking, are not so much meant, as Words empty, and insignificant; Words of mere Sound, without a real meaning, or any edifying Use; new and unusual Terms and Forms of Speech, unknown in holy Language, and unmeet for the expressing the Sense of the Words of the Holy Ghost. These are likewise called *profane*, that is, common and unholy: because they are none of the holy Words neither in Sound nor Sense, because they are neither the same, nor equivalent to the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor of his Spirit in the holy Scriptures; and therefore being coined in the Mint-House of Man's Wisdom, for carnal Ends and Purposes, can never be fit for Sanctuary-Service, nor blest to the Use of Edifying in divine Things. Two Things, it seems the Man of God is here cautioned against.

(1.) "He must avoid" all dark, dubious, meaningless, new, useless, litigious Words; Words also that have not Things nor Ideas answering to them in the Holy Scripture, of which Sort many One is to be found in Popery especially: (as, to instance, Mass, Transubstantiation, unwritten Traditions, Diocesan Bishop, Archbishop, Patriarch, Vicar of Christ, Justification before God, by Works, Merit, Seven Sacraments, &c.) He is cautioned, I say, against the Use of all such in Religion, particularly in his dispensing of the Mysteries of God. He must not mingle them with, far less substitute them in the place of God's Words; for they will, instead of edifying, but subvert the Hearers, and corrupt the Faith.

(2.) He

*The T R U S T,*

(2.) He is no less cautioned against turning the Words of the Holy Ghost into vain Words. For though the Words of Scripture can never become profane; yet may they "be profaned; they may" by denying or evacuating them of their proper Value, Sense and Meaning, be made empty vain Words: which the Words of God in themselves never were, nor never can be, Deut. xxxviii. 47. The proud Mind of Man, unwilling to be captivated to the Faith of Christ, that it may bring the Truths of the Gospel into Bondage, to its own Reason and fleshly Conceptions of Spiritual Things, will force, rack and torture the Words, Terms, and Forms of Speech wherein they are exprest, putting upon them impertinent, false or absurd Senses, destructive to the Faith, and contrary to the Scope of the Place and Tenor of the Scripture. Thus Hymeneus and Philetus made Resurrection a vain Word, by holding it was past already, 2 Tim. i. 9. The Deity, Sacrifice, Satisfaction of Christ, the Righteousness of Faith, are made vain Words by Socinians and others. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, being by many turned into Work, and held to justify as such is made a vain Word: Free Grace, and the Believers Freedom from the Law, as a Covenant, are no better used by others: God, Jehovah, Son of God, Eternity, and proper Divinity, when given to Christ, are by the new Arians made vain Words, empty and delusive Sounds.

Now, every such Sort of Words, the Man of God must avoid, shun and "turn aside from;" that is, (1.) He must not use, but abstain from, yea, lothe them himself. (2.) He must not admit or countenance, but disprove, rebuke and condemn them, when used by others; charging them not to teach otherwise, but to hold by the wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Things he was to shun, are held forth under the Character of the Oppositions of Science falsely so called. The Word, translated Science, signifies Knowledge, such as is certain and solid; and so it is rendered elsewhere in the New Testament, Now, it is evident, the Apostle here points at a certain Sort of Knowledge, Wisdom and Learning about Divine Things, which was really no true Knowledge or Wisdom at all: therefore, it having the Name, Pretence and Appearance of spiritual Wisdom and Learning, but no more, it was miscalled, or wrongly called by that

*A Synod S E R M O N.*

that Name. By the Oppositions of this Science, falsely so called, are meant, not so much the Objections and sophistical Reasonings of Enemies against the Truth, as the Disputes, Litigations, Bandyings, Contradictions of the different Sects and Parties, who went under the same general Name, and professed the same Science falsely so called, among themselves.

In all which the Apostle has his Eye, not as some learned Men have thought, upon the Gnostics, who, since they sprung up not before the beginning of the Second Century, were not yet, in the Apostle's Days, in being; neither do several Things, the Apostle says of this Sort of People, in this and other of his Epistles, agree to the Heresy of the Gnostics, as might be shown particularly if it was needful. The Apostle, I say, has his Eye not upon them, but on the Jews, the Judaizing Christians and false Teachers: for they, not the Gnostics, were strenuous Asserters and Teachers of the Law, 1 Tim. i. 7. and that Believers in Christ also were under it, Gal. throughout. They pretended above all Men to be skilled in the Knowledge of the Will of God, having a *Form of Knowledge* (or Scheme of Science, "as the Words may be rendered") and of the Truth in the Law, Rom. ii. 18, 20. They were great Admirers and Promoters of the Cabalistical Learning and Traditions: they, slighting the plain literal Sense of Scripture, contrived mystical allegorical Ones, even in the most plain Passages, and found out Mysteries in Words and Letters: they were also addicted to, and studied in *Fables and Genealogies*, Tit. i. 14, and 3, 9. All which ministred many Questions, Disputes, and vain Wrangling about Words, 1 Tim. i. 4, 6. and vi. 4, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 23. Tit. iii. 9. Hence they turned aside from the Faith to *vain Janglings*, 1 Tim. i. 6. This their falsely named Knowledge, or Science, they preferred to the Knowledge of the Gospel-Doctrine in its Simplicity, as taught by the Apostle, and taught otherwise than he did, as it is intimated by him, 1 Tim. i. 3. and vi. 3. Tit. i. 13. Now, they being of different Parties and Opinions, they contradicted and opposed one the other; each supporting his own, and overthrowing his Antagonist's Opinions, the best he could: though oftentimes, through the Obscurity and Uncertainty of the Things themselves, as well



well as of their Reasonings about them, they neither knew what they said, nor whereof they affirmed, 1 Tim. i. 7.

The general Characters, however, given of them, of their Science, and of their Management of it, were really, and, no doubt, in the Design of the Holy Ghost, Fore-descriptions exact and pat enough of the Gnostics and their Science falsely so called; as also of the Scholastic Divines in after Ages, and their Science of Theology falsely so called: who, instead of coming to the Study of holy Things, with an holy humble Frame of Heart, praying and waiting for Divine Illumination and Teaching, that they themselves might be made wise in the Mysteries of the Gospel, and able to instruct others in the Knowledge of God (a Method which, alas! never came into their Minds) they came puffed up in their fleshly Minds, with a Conceit of their own Ability, Sagacity and penetrating Faculty, and provided with Philosophical Notions and Conceptions, with Syllogisms, Sophisms, Distinctions, Solutions, and other crafty Windings of Man's serpentine Wit: and, thus accoutred, they set boldly upon Divine Revelation, framed the Gospel to their own Imaginations, by dressing it up in the foolish Attire of their metaphysical Subtilties and Terms of Art, or rather their *profane and vain Babblings*, thereby wholly corrupting and debasing it, and drawing off the Minds of Men from the Simplicity of the Truth, as it is in Jesus Christ. Thus they, with their vain, senseless and unhallowed Babblings of Terms and Distinctions, and with the Oppositions, Bandyings and Bickerings of their different Sects and Parties one against another; thus, I say, they waxing vain in their Imaginations, missed the mark of the Faith, betrayed the precious Trust, and the Gospel of none Effect.

Near akin to these are all they also, who come not to the wholesome Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, as Disciples to learn, but as Masters to seek Countenance and Support to their pre-conceived Opinions; and who handle spiritual Things not in a spiritual Manner, not in the *Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, not with that Evidence and Plainness which it suited practically to affect the Minds and Consciences of Men, and which the Scripture gives us both Example and Direction for, but with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, or with curious, subtile Reasonings, or in  
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a cold, dark, abstruse, unedifying Way; and who deal in Divine Things by Way of Conjecture, Opinion, Hypothesis and curious Speculation; disputing more fiercely for these, than for the sure and substantial Truths of God; or who defend the Truth itself with slight and insufficient Arguings, with carnal Weapons fetched forth of a Man's own, and not from the Magazine of the holy Scriptures; and in a Word, all who in any Sort corrupt the Word of God, or handle it deceitfully: all such fall justly under the Character of "being" Professors, or Teachers of a spiritual Science, falsely so called.

And, lest any should think there could be little Danger to Gospel Ministers from such vain *Babbings* and Opposition of Science, &c. the Apostle tells Timothy. that, how weak soever these Sort of Snares may seem, none ought to be secure, or too confident in meddling with them "For the Words and the Inventions of Man's Wisdom are, both of them enticing; the Offspring of his Brain are commonly to himself, if not to others likewise, no less pretty and charming Things than those of his Body. People come to abundance of Years, may be so far Children still, as to be pleased and taken with Nicknacks and Gewgaws of this Kind." Yea, by good Words and fair Speeches, even of this Sort, may "silly Women be led Captive (for it is this Sort of Men the Apostle points at, 2 Tim- iii 6") the Hearts of the Simple bewitched and deceived, so far as to disgust the plain saying Truths of the Gospel, and to prefer the Leaves to the Fruit, the Shadow to the Substance. And accordingly, says the Apostle, some, who once aimed right at the Faith, and were fair to have reached it, by taking heed to these, have insensibly been so intangled, that they turned aside from, and quite missed that Mark, and so lost Salvation; which it is not possible to obtain without a Belief of the Truth, which some professing, have erred concerning the Faith. Dismal and fatal are the Effects of Curiosity, Pride and Vanity of Mind. From the first Part of the Text, *O Timothy, keep, &c.* I offer this

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and every one of them, that they may so do. *O Timothy, keep that which is committed, &c.*

It would be next to Indiscretion, in such an Audience, to spend Time in showing the Foundation of this Doctrine; or to be telling, that these, though delivered by the Hand of a Servant, are Christ's Words to Timothy, and every Minister in particular.

The Method of discoursing of this Subject shall be, 1. To explain. 2. To confirm. And, 3. To apply it.

For *Explication*, It will be necessary to consider,

(1.) This Trust, with the committing of it. (2.) Timothy, and every Minister's Duty with Reference to it, or the keeping of it. And to begin,

*First*, With the Trust. It would not, I conceive, be wide off the Purpose, to say, if Time did allow,

I, Some Things in the general; as,

1. That it is a Steward's Trust. Ministers are Stewards of God, Tit. i. 7. intrusted with the Affairs and Concerns of the Household of God. The Order and Provision of his House is, in a Sense committed to their Management; they are impowered, with Consent and Concurrence of these concerned, to receive into, and turn People out of the Family: they, as Stewards of the Bread of Life, Stewards of the Mysteries of God, 2 Cor. iv. 1. are appointed to rule and feed the Family; by giving every one his Portion of Meat, and giving it in due Season. And if the Dogs be suffered to eat of the Childrens Bread, and to devour that which is holy; if the Children be neglected and let starve, or if they be so much as straitened with short Allowance, or fed with unwholsome Food, the Stewards must answer for it. Now, of a Steward it is chiefly required that a Man be found faithful; therefore it is of great Consequence to such, to know how to behave themselves right in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, Mat. xiv. 46.—49. and blessed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing, as he left him Orders. but *Wo unto that evil Servant, who, because his Lord delays his coming, begins to smite (whether with Tongue or Hand) his Fellow-Servants, and to eat and drink with the Drunken: the Lord of that Servant shall come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him him his Portion, &c.* 2 Cor. v. 20.

2. It is an Ambassadors Trust, 2 Cor. v. 20. They are employed and sent by Heaven, on an Errand of Peace, and on an Errand of Love; they are sent with an Embassy of Peace to rebel Sinners, revolted from their rightful and natural Lord, and taking Shelter under Satan the Prince of Darkness and Arch Traitor against Heaven. And since to them, as Ambassadors, so great a Trust is committed as the Word, *the Ministry of Reconciliation*, Ver. 18, 19: this Treaty of Peace they ought to negotiate with the utmost Fidelity, Tenderneſs and Earneſtneſs; proclaiming the glad Tidings, the good News of Heaven, viz. Peace on Earth to the worst of Sinners,\* and perswading them to believe and accept of it, every one for himself;† and in one Word, beseeching and praying them in Christ's Stead, that they would be reconciled to God.

They are likewise sent on an Errand of Love, to negotiate a Treaty of Marriage betwixt the Son of God Immanuel, and the wretched Outcasts of Adam's Family. They as Ambassadors, and likewise as Friends of the Bridegroom, are sent to speak good of Christ to Sinners, to carry the Tidings of his Love and Good-will to them, and to perswade them to believe and entertain it, to woo and win their Hearts to him; and, in one Word, to espouse them unto one Husband, 2 Cor. xi. 2. in Order to all the Privileges and Duties of a married Relation.

This is an honourable but a weighty Trust; wherefore they have much need to be well acquainted with, and carefully to heed their Instructions, lest in Case of not succeeding, or Mismanagement, they endanger not their Heads only, but their Souls.

3. It is a Workman, a Labourer's Trust. They have the Charge of God's Husbandry, they are Workers under him, and together with him, 1 Cor. iii. 9.—15. 2 Cor. 6. 1. Having done their utmost to break up the fallow Ground, they are to sow God's Seed; even the incorruptible Seed of Gospel Truth, skilfully dividing the Seed, according to the Condition of the Soil, 2 Tim. 2. 15. After which they are to watch and herd the Field, lest the Enemy sow Tares; and to weed it also in case of Briars, Thorns, or other Roots of Bitterneſs springing up.

They

They are Workmen Builders, employed to build God an House. And accordingly, as wise Master Builders, are they carefully to lay first the Foundation, namely, the Doctrine and Person of Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 11. and thereupon to build, not Hay and Stubble, but Gold and precious Stones: *For every ones Work will be tried*, verse 13.

4. It is a Watchman's Trust. *Son of Man*, saith the Lord to Ezekiel, *I have made thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel*, Ezek. iii. 17. *Therefore hear the Word at my Mouth, and give them Warning from me.* Ministers are given for Eyes to the Church, to watch for her, and to watch over Souls, Heb. xiii. 17. They are to warn of Danger from within, and of Danger from without, guarding equally against the giving of false Alarms; whether on Design, or through Precipitance and Unskilfulness (which may sometimes be of very dangerous and dismal Consequence) and against failing, thro' Negligence, or worse, to give these that are needful and true. When there is just Ground or Occasion, they must set the Trumpet to their Mouth, cry aloud and not spare, tho' they should get no Thanks for their disturbing People, when they are disposed to rest; on all such Occasions, however timeously and distinctly, and that under an awful Certification. *If the Watchmen see the Sword come, and blow not the Trumpet, and the People be not warned: If the Sword come, and take any Person from among them, he is taken away in his Iniquity: But his Blood will I require at the Watchman's Hand*, Ezek. xxxiii. 6. Therefore they need to be Men of Knowledge, spiritual Wisdom and Discerning, wakerife Men, of public Spirits, Men of Zeal, Courage and Resolution. Bad is that Character of the Watchmen, which we have, Isa. lvi. 10. *His Watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb Dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping (or dreaming, talking in their Sleep) lying down, loving to slumber.*

5. It is a Shepherd's Trust. They are set oyer the Flock of God, to take heed to it, and to oversee it, to know the State of it, and to feed it, (Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2.) With Knowledge and with Understanding, Jer. iii. 15. To lead them in green Pastures, and by the still Waters, to rule and to defend them from the Lion and the Wolves, to seek and bring home the Strays, to heal the Diseased,  
and



and, after the Example of the chief Shepherd, to carry the Lambs in their Bosom, and gently to lead those that are with young, Isa. xl. 11.

Now to be a Shepherd of Souls, is, doubtless, a great Trust, and weighty; particularly, because of the Account they are to make: For, if through their Neglect, or Unfaithfulness otherwise, any of the Flock committed to their Charge, be lost or devoured, their Blood will the Lord require at the Shepherd's Hand. And,

Therefore, blessed is that Shepherd, who, in making his Accounts, will be able to say with his Lord, *of all thou hast given me, I have lost none*: When the chief Shepherd appears, *he shall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. v. 4. But wo to to the foolish Shepherd, Zech. xi. 15. to the Shepherds that cannot understand, Isa. lvi. 11. to the Idol Shepherds, Zech. xi. 17. *For the Sword shall be upon his Arm, and upon his right Eye; his Arm shall be clean dried up, and his right Eye shall be utterly darkned*. Wo to the Pastors that destroy and scatter the Sheep of my Pasture, saith the Lord, Ezek. xxxiv. 2. Jer. xxiii 1.

6. It is a Soldier's, a Warrior's Trust. The War is principally betwixt Jesus Christ, the Captain of the Lord's Hosts, the Captain of Salvation, and Satan the common Enemy of God and Man. In this War, and under this Captain, every Christian is called to be a Soldier; but Ministers are commisionate Officers, clothed with a special Trust. Each one of them has his Post assigned him, by his General, which they are to stand fast, be valiant, and quit themselves like Men, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. on the Head of those committed to their leading.

They have to fight against foreign Enemies, Principalities and Powers, the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, spiritual Wickednesses in high Places, Eph. vi. 12. against domestic intestine Enemies, Flesh and Blood; their own, as well as the Lusts of other Men, their own carnal Affections, carnal Reason, and Wisdom, their own Unbelief, &c. against neighbouring Enemies, the Things, namely, and the Men of the World, Gallius, Tyrants, Persecutors, Hypocrites, Seducers, sometimes, and false Bretheren; and in one Word, Satan's Militia, in all their Denominations; against the World, as well storming and raging, as fawn-

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ing and dealing subtilly; against all, whoever they be, that in any Case side with the Enemy, in so far as they do so.

They are to fight for Christ their Lord and King, his Interests and Glory, his Truths, his Ordinances, his People, for Holiness against Sin, for their own Souls, &c. Therefore must they, even as he did before them, endure hardness, as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. i. 18. War a good Warfare, holding Faith and a good Conscience, 1 Tim. i. 18. fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life, whereunto they are also called, 1 Tim. vi. 12. resist even unto Blood, striving against Sin: And in order to this, they, of all Men, have most Need to put on the whole Armour of God, that they may stand, and to beware of intangling themselves in the Affairs of this Life, otherwise they cannot please him, who has called them to be Soldiers, 2 Tim. ii. 4. Their Fidelity in this Trust will, when they are to be dismissed from the Service, be Matter of Joy unspeakable; as it was to Paul in the like Case; *I have fought the good Fight, said he, Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown,*—2 Tim iv. 8. for whoever is faithful unto the Death, shall go off more than Conqueror, and receive the *Crown of Life, Righteousness and Glory*; the Victor's Crown, the triumphal Crown. But,

II. If we would have a more particular View of this Trust, we may, I conceive, according to the Text and Context, take it up in these Three, *The Mystery of the Doctrine of Christ, the Institutions of Christ, and his holy Commandments.*

I. The Mystery of the Doctrine of Christ. The Doctrine, to touch on a few, of the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour towards Man, Tit. iii. 4. even of his great Love, and the exceeding Riches of his Grace in Kindness towards us thro' Jesus Christ, Eph. ii. 4, 7. the Doctrine of the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, &c. Tit. ii. 11, 12. The Doctrine of God manifested in the Flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. coming in our Place and Room, and as our Surety, making full and complete Satisfaction to divine Justice, offended by Man's Sin, 2 Pet. ii. 24. and iii. 18. 2 Cor. v. 21. answering in all Points, the Demands of a broken Law, by not

only dying to redeem us from the Curse of it, being made a Curse for us, Gal. iv. 4, 5, and iii. 13. But by doing perfectly all, the first Covenant required of us in Order to Salvation, or Life rather, Rom. v. 19. The Doctrine of Christ's glorious Person, Offices, Undertaking, all-sufficient inexhaustible Fulness; as being made of God unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption; \* The Doctrine of Christ's Market of free Grace in the Gospel, viz. Of no Price or Qualification, being required of lost undone Sinners, as a Condition in Order to their believing in the Name of the Son of God, "in order" to their being made welcome to Christ, and interested in Him "by Faith, Isa. lv. 1. John vi. 37. Rev. xxii. 17." † The Doctrine of Justification, by the active and passive Righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, as our whole and sole Righteousness, in, and by the Act of Believing on him, as the *Lord our Righteousness*: The Doctrine of Repentance from dead Works, as the Gift of an exalted Saviour, and as flowing from Faith in his Blood; The Doctrine of the Soul's indissoluble Union with Christ, and of everlasting Deliverance from the Curse of the Law, upon one's first believing; Of living, while we are in the Flesh, by the Faith of the Son of God; Of receiving all, doing all, enduring all in the Way of Trust, Confidence and Dependence on Him in the Promises; The Doctrine of Salvation, not by Works of Righteousness, done or to be done by us, but by Free-grace from first to last. I do not distinguish between the Doctrine and the Promises of the Gospel; the Doctrine being much of it contained in the Promise.

This Doctrine is what, in the Language of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, goes by the Name of the *Gospel of the Grace of God*, Acts xx. 24. The *Word of Faith*, Rom. x. 8. The *Word of Life*, Phil. ii. 16. The *Word of Truth*, the *Gospel of our Salvation*, Eph. i. 1. The *Gospel of Peace*, Eph. vi. 15. The *Wisdom of God*, the *manifest Wisdom of God*, Eph. iii. 10. The *Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, 1 Cor. ii. 6. The *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, Mark iv. 11. The *Revelation of the Mystery which was kept secret since the World began*, Rom. xvi. 25. The

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Mystery,

\* Remark 7.

Mystery of the Will of God, Eph. i. 9. *Which from the Beginning of the World hath been hid in God*, Eph. iii. 9. *The Myſte y of Chriſt*, Eph. iii. 4. *The Myſtery of the Goſpel*, Eph. vi. 19. *The Myſtery of the Faith*, 1 Tim. iii. 9. *The Myſtery of God the Father, and of Chriſt*, Col. ii. 2. *This is that Glaſs, wherein, with open Face, we behold the Glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Even the Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, Chap. iv. 6.

This Doctrine is a bleſſed Emanation from the eternal Fountain of Wiſdom and of Truth: And, being a raviſhing, matchleſs Diſcovery of the divine Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Condeſcenſion, Grace, Love, and of all the divine Perfections, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt, “it” has more Impreſſions of the divine Glory and Excellency on it, by much, than has the whole Creation of God beſides. The Deſign and native Effect of which “Goſpel,” when it is believed and entertained, when it is allowed to have its due Operation on the Minds of Men, is their Recovery from their original Apoſtacy, their Deliverance from a State of Miſery, Darkneſs, Bondage, into a State of glorious Liberty, Light and Peace; their filial Acceſs to, and Communion with God now, and their immediate, full, never-ending Enjoyment of him afterwards. Their Holineſs, their Uſefulneſs in the World, yea, every Thing that is truly good, holy, juſt, benign or beneficial among Men, is derived from it, or influenced by it. This glorious Doctrine, is what is committed to the Truſt of Miniſters, to be by them carried and proclaimed through the World, as good and true News from Heaven; to aſſure the Sons of Men of their infallible Certainty, and to perſuade them to believe the ſame, and to venture their All upon them: For to a carnal World they are Fooliſhneſs; they look on them as an unlikely, unſeaſible Story, and therefore are they by them, if not utterly rejected, entertained with a cold Indifference and Diſregard: But to them that believe, are they found to be the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God.

Theſe Truths of the Goſpel have, of all other, the higheſt Certainty, as coming immediately from Heaven, and with all the nobleſt Tendency, as was ſaid, in that they lead all, who believe and embrace them, directly Home thither



thither; no less than the Pillar of Cloud and of Fire, did old Israel to the typical Canaan. It was this Doctrine, when the World was wrapt up in Darknes, thicker than that, in the beginning, on the Face of the Deep, let down the Day-spring from on High upon us, and brought Life and Immortality to Light again. These are Pearls and Jewels of Heaven, more precious than Rubies, and that all Things to be desired here below, are not to be compared with: No wonder then, that to Believers they be dearer than the Apple of their Eye, yea, than their very Lives.

This Divine, heavenly Doctrine, revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ to his Apostles, and by them, or rather the Holy Spirit in them, faithfully delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures, is the first and principal Part of the Christian Religion: for without it there can be no divine saving Faith, which comes only by hearing of the Word of God. Without it there can be no Church, which being no other than a Society of believing Men and Women, by Faith united to Christ, and one to another in Love; where the Doctrine of Faith is not, there Believers cannot be. Without this, Antiquity, long Successions, Pomp and Magnificence of Churches, and of outward Administrations in Religion, frequent and fervent Devotions, Strictness and Austerity of Life, bearing of a Semblance of Holiness, can no more make a Church, than a well drawn Picture does a Man. An Union of Multitudes in the same Sentiments and Opinions, is no other without it, than a Conspiracy of Error against the Truth: which, by how much it is the more strait and close, is so much the more dangerous: all which have, for many Ages past, been verified of the Church of Rome, falsely so called. Whatever Disorders or Corruptions may creep into a Church, among the Officers or the Members of it, if the Doctrine of the Gospel remains sound and entire, they will be the easier remedied by much: but if that is no more to be found, the Foundation is razed: in which Case, all the Reparations can be made, will be to little Purpose, without that be laid anew. Further, the Doctrine of the Gospel being, as the dawning of the eternal Day, when it, in any material Points, once falls under an Eclipse, Night and the shadow of Death overspreads a Church



Church or Land, the Path of Life is lost, Souls are bewildered, and can no longer find the Way into the City.

There are two Things further I shall take Notice of, anent the Truths or Doctrine of the glorious Gospel; one is, the Reason why so frequently in the New Testament, it goes by the Name of the FAITH, namely, because the first and main Thing required of us, with Reference to it, that we may be saved,\* it is, that we believe it; not in a general and historical Way only, but cordially, firmly, particularly, and with Application to ourselves. It is of the last Importance to Sinners, both ourselves and others, and therefore deserves our particular Notice and Regard, viz. That the Doctrine of the Gospel, the Mystery of God in Christ, reconciling the World to himself, the good News from Heaven, of Salvation and eternal Life in Christ, to lost Sinners of Adam's Race, that whoever of them all will believe in his Name, shall not perish, but have everlasting Life; that is, I say, is the great Ordinance of God, appointed, blest and made effectual, as well for begetting of Faith, as for building us up in Faith and Holiness: this "therefore" of believing the Gospel is, by any Means, to be opened, and prest upon lost Sinners, as that without which the Gospel will be of none Effect, as to them. And here great Wisdom, Experience and Insight into the Mystery of Christ, is needful: all I take upon me to say of it at the Time, is, || That it is somewhat removed as far as can be from the Nature of a Work, that is, Faith and Believing in the most native and genuine Sense of the Words, which the Lord requires of us, that we may be saved: for if we carefully heed not the proper Sense of the Words of the Holy Ghost, we will be in Danger of losing the Faith.†

The next is, the necessary Connexion there is, betwixt Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth, between the glorious Truths of the Gospel, believed and embraced; and Holiness of Heart and Life. That these Doctrines of the Gospel, believed as faithful and good, with Application to one's self (otherwise they are not believed as they ought: for to believe they are faithful, good and true in the general, and to some, is no more than what Hypocrites and Reprobates may do and believe) are and will, according to the Measure of Faith, be a mighty and never.

never-failing Mean of Sanctification, is evident from 2 Cor. vii. 1. compared with the last Verse of the former Chapter, Rom. vi. 17 2 Cor. iii. 18. 1 John iii. 3. 2 Theff. ii. 13. Tit. ii. 11, 12 *For the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, — we should live soberly, &c.* \* The Law, though it taught the same Thing, many a Day, yet it could never, for all its Authority and Severity, make one sinful Creature learn the Lesson: but the Grace of God revealed to Faith, in the Doctrine of the Gospel, teaches it effectually, and to purpose.† That it must be so, and cannot be otherwise, might, if it were necessary, or Time did allow, be made as evident, as the most demonstrable Proposition is.

For the same Reason it is, that the Doctrine of the Gospel is called, the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, 2 Tim. vi. 3. the great *Myster of Godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. The Heathens had their Religious Mysteries in their Idol Temples, that miserable Idolaters were, by their Priests, the Devil's Ministers, secretly initiated and instructed in; which were no other, generally, than Mysteries of Impurity and Ungodliness: the Apostles speak also of another Mystery, which was even in their Days began to work, and has since been revealed, namely, the Mystery of Antichrist, directly opposite to the Mystery of Christ; but it also is a Mystery of Iniquity, of Abominations and Filthiness, much a-kin to the former, Rev. xvii. A Mystery which is yet, at this Day, alas! working mightily in these Lands: but behold, says the Apostle, here is another Sort of Mystery, even a Mystery of Godliness; a Mystery that renounces the hidden Things of Dishonesty, that abandons all Manner of Ungodliness, a Mystery that teaches Godliness, effectually works, and produces Godliness in all, who are once initiated in the Knowledge and Belief of it.

The Obedience of Faith, that we read of, Rom. xvi. 26. is of the same Import; namely, the Obedience that is inseparable from Faith, that natively flows from Faith, that is produced, by Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, by a Faith of the glorious Truths of the Gospel: and besides this Obedience of Faith, there is not, neither can there be, any evangelical Obedience. Sinners out of Christ, it is true,  
must

must be pressed and encouraged to the Use of all Means appointed for the working of Faith, and for their coming to Acquaintance with Christ and God in him: (for without they hear, to instance, how can they believe?) \* But till once a Soul be saved by believing, there will not, nor can there be any, whether comfortable or acceptable. Doing; † for without Faith, it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. From all which we may learn, \* that the preaching of the Doctrine of Free-Grace (however the Corruptions of Man's Nature be disposed to abuse it, which the Spirit of God was aware of, and which he has sufficiently cautioned us against, in the New Testament) will never, of itself, lead People to looseness of Life; yea, so far from it, it is the great Mean appointed and blest, to the quite contrary Purpose, namely, the producing of real Holiness: therefore, all Fears of that Sort, are equally vain and ignorant. †

Now, this Mystery of God and Christ, this Mystery of Godliness, this Doctrine of Faith, is committed in Trust unto Ministers, to be by them kept sound and entire, to be kept pure and distinct; to be kept not only the same for Substance, but the same in point of Simplicity.

*First*, This Trust is committed to them, to be kept sound and entire. Of the whole Mystery of Faith revealed, nothing may be lost: the very Fragments of Gospel Truth, if any of them may be so compared, are to be gathered up and preserved. As even the Filings of Gold, because Gold as well as the whole Piece, are not to be lost, so it is here: and much the rather, because of that necessary Connexion there is among Gospel Truths, that one of them cannot be lost or wanting, without Prejudice to the others. Wherefore, Ministers must keep, and as they have Opportunity, declare all the Counsel of God, Acts xx. 27. As Moses would not, so neither must they consent, that one Hoof of what is committed to their Charge, be detained or cut off from the rest. None who hear the Name of Christ, but they will be content, yea, zealous to keep some Part of this Trust: but since the Doctrine of the Gospel is committed in Trust, without it be kept whole and entire, it is not kept in the Sense of the Text; and the Trustee will otherwise be found in *Male fide*: Yea, a Thousand to one, but he shall be found a slothful and unprofitable Servant, and



and sentenced accordingly. For, however we may come and go, and compromise in our own Matters, we, by no Means, may use a like Freedom, in reference to what is committed to us in Trust, with express Order to the contrary. What our Lord says, Mat. v. 19. in Reference to the Law, is equally applicable to the Doctrines of the Gospel, namely, *Who so therefore shall break one of these least Commandments* (or betray one of these least Truths) *and shall teach Men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same,* &c.

Secondly, This Part of the Trust is committed to be kept pure and distinct. No Additions, no Mixtures, no Alterations may be made here: Hay and Stubble may not be interlaced with the Gold and precious Stones to be built on the Foundation; they must not adulterate the Wares of Heaven with their own Stuff, the better to get it vend- ed off. The Lord complains, Jer. xxiii. That the Pro- phets gave forth their own Dreams and Lies in his Name: wherefore he says, *The Prophet that hath a Dream, let him tell a Dream; and he that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully: what is the Chaff to the Wheat? saith the Lord,* Ver 28. They must not deliver any Thing as the Lord's saying, but what they are sure they have receiv- ed at the Lord's Mouth, in his holy Oracles; *Thus saith the Lord,* must not be heard, when the Lord has not spoken it. "But more" particularly, they must keep the Doc- trine of Christ distinct from,

1. The Doctrines of Men, their own or of others. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Com- mandments of Men,* Mat. xv. 9. *Why are ye Subject to Ordinances—after—the Doctrines of Men,* Col. ii. 22. It must, by any Means, be kept distinct from the vain Bab- blings and Oppositions of Science, in the Text. See also 1 Tim. i. 3. and vi. 3. The Doctrine of the Gospel being a Trust, there is no Room left for Ingine or witty Inven- tion, in Point of new Things: there is Place for Prayer, Meditation and Study indeed, in order, not to any new In- vention, but to the Discovery of the Things of the Spirit of God. The Gospel not being as Philosophy is, the Pro- duct of human Reason, Ministers must content themselves with being Trustees, without affecting to be Authors in the Case. The

The vain and presumptuous Mind of Man, finding itself so hedged up here, from inventing or adding any Thing of its own, becomes impatient of the Restraint, breaks through the Bounds God has set him, and will needs be a Free-thinker, and an Author in Divine Things. But alas! by their waxing vain in their Imaginations, their foolish Heart is darkened: and *by professing themselves to be wise, they become Fools*, Rom. i. 21, 22. How much, not only in former Days, but at this present Time, even in Britain and Ireland, Christ in his Gospel is suffering from this Sort of Men, this Audience I presume, needs not be informed. But what is most lamentable, "next to the " Dishonour done to our glorious God and Saviour," such Divines falsely so called, go never to Destruction alone; yea, so far from it, they lead Shoals of silly Souls (who call them Master, and are willing in a Sense to be baptized in their Name) along with them, and after them: So fond are we naturally of the Divinity devised and taught by Men, rather than of that Divinity, which has glorious Christ for its Author, who brought it from the Bosom of the Father, the Seat "and Source" of Counsel and Affection, and revealed it unto us.

But this Gospel being committed to Ministers in Trust, as an "unestimable" Pearl out of Heaven's Treasure, they must keep it clear of every Thing that is Man's: They must banish from their Faith and Preaching, every Doctrine, be it ancient or modern, that calls Man Father. If a Doctrine can instruct its Pedigree no otherwise, than by the Subtilty of the Schools, the Authority of Councils, the Characters of such Godfathers or Adopters, or by its own goodly Features "and Complexion," as being probable, fine, witty, rational, well-proportioned, it is but a spurious Brood; and therefore not to be owned as any Part of the Trust: Since it was not transmitted to us from Christ, by his Apostles, it belongs to the vain Babble and Bastard Science of the Text. It was well said by Basil one of the Ancients, That Ministers are not to be Authors of any Doctrine, but Guardians of that which is committed to their Trust †; And that the Work of Councils, assembled for the Cause of Truth, is not to make new Articles

† *Hist. Trip. L. 7. Cap. 36. cit. Daill.*

Articles of Faith, but to preserve, explain and defend, the Doctrine of Faith delivered from the Beginning, against such Errors and Heresies as rise in Opposition thereto.

2. \* They must keep † distinct from the Law, which, though it may be called the Doctrine of God, yet, being of a Nature and Design quite different from this, and God himself having separated and kept them distinct, we must not offer to unite or conjoin them †. The one is called the Ministration of the Letter, of Death, and of Condemnation, the other a Ministration of the Spirit, of Life, and of Righteousness, 2 Cor. iii. The confounding, jumbling, or blending of these two after any Sort, this same Apostle was, we find, as much afraid of, as one would be of mingling the rankest Poison into the most sovereign Medicine. What Care and Pains he was at, to keep Ministers from teaching, and People from expecting Salvation, in Whole, or in Part, by the Law, as an Instrument or mean of Righteousness and Life, his Epistles, particularly these to the Romans and Galatians, do, and will bear Testimony to all Generations. The Difficulty is great here, because of a strong Propension in all Men, by Nature, towards the Way of the old Covenant: And therefore much need has the Man of God, in this Business, of spiritual Judgment and Understanding from above; especially when the Danger is considered: For if herein he mistakes, let him mean never so well, he kills, instead of curing.

It is certain, there is need of the Law as a School-master to bring us to Christ, and it is as certain, they who are once brought to him by means of it, tho' they continue to need both Discipline and Instruction, are never to be sent back to their old School-master, \* the Law as a Covenant, I mean, for either the one or the other. Our Lord Jesus Christ being a divine Prophet and King, both of them, wants neither Wisdom nor Authority for instructing and governing his Children: And as he needs not, so neither will he trust them with any such Governors or Tutors. || This Trust therefore Ministers are to keep so distinct and pure from the Law, as not only to teach People not to look for Salvation, neither for Works nor by Works, but only for Christ and by Faith in him. †; But

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also



also carefully to caution them against the seeking of Salvation, as it were by the Works of the Law.

The Difficulty and Importance of this Point, with the Spiritual Skill that is necessary to it, made Luther, that third Elijah, often say, He who had learned rightly to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel, was a good Divine. It is "likewise" a judicious Observe of the great Owen on that Text, 2 Cor. xi. 3. *I fear lest—as the Serpent beguiled Eve—so your Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ*; viz. That the Tenor of the Covenant of Works being proposed to our first Parents in a Prohibition with a Threatening annexed thereto, and the Covenant of Grace, being proposed to us principally in the Promises of the Gospel; As Satan beguiled Eve, by corrupting the Threatening with his false Interpretation; So he, ever since, by all Means endeavoured to beguile her Posterity, by corrupting the Promises of the new Covenant with one false Interpretation or other, in Opposition to the Wisdom and Grace of God displayed therein.

I have insisted the longer on this, that I take it to be the main of the Trust intended in the Text; tho' not exclusive of, but rather as including the other Two, namely,

II. The Institutions of Christ. For, since He, as the alone King and Head of his Church, has, in and by this Gospel, changed and abolished these solemn Ordinances of Worship and Government, which God himself, by Moses, set up under the Old Testament, thereby rendering it criminal for any one whoever, to serve God any longer according to these; it is not to be thought, either that he would leave his Church destitute of Ordinances, or that he removed these which had their Rise from the Wisdom of God, to make Room for the Wisdom of Man to display its witty, but vain, Inventions in the Matters of God's Glory, and of his own eternal Felicity. No, sure; He who is set over the House of Jacob, to rule it for ever and ever; He who sits a Priest upon his Throne, with full Authority as well as Ability, to build the Temple of the Lord; He who is a Son over his own House, has been no less faithful to Him who appointed Him, than was Moses in all the House of God; The Apostle and High Priest of our Profession has completely furnished his House with Ordinances,

with Officers and Rules of Order; and has committed all in Trust and Charge to his Ministers. As the last Words of the Old Testament run, *Remember the Law of Moses my Servant—with the Statutes and the Judgments*, Mal. iv. 4. So our Lord's last Words to his Ministers, when he was leaving the Earth, were, *Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you*, Matth. xxviii. 20.

They are appointed and set in the House of God, for this very Thing, to see that all Things, commanded by the God of Heaven: For if the Ordinances, whether of Worship, or Government, be in the least corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ, the divine Presence, Blessing and Acceptance, are in so far forfeited. And therefore, if they be in ever so little tainted or blended, immediately from their own Wisdom, or other-Lusts, or from the Lusts of other Men, be they of what Character they will, without their bearing due Testimony against the same, they will have it to answer for; For none may in the least add to, or diminish from divine Institutions, without they shew their Commission under the Broad-Seal of Heaven for that Effect; and likewise instruct their Power to bless and make effectual what they appoint.

The Ordinances of Christ, as they have no need of the meretricious Paint, Attire, or Embellishments of Man's Wit, their Glory being of another Nature; so they being Heaven's appointed Means for glorifying God in the World, and for our Sanctification, as well as a sacred Trust, Ministers have need to be very jealous over them; and so much the more, that God has, in Reference to the Ordinances of his House especially, declared himself a Jealous God. Will-worship and voluntary Humility are an Abomination to the Lord; and all one with Pride, Rebellion, and Irreligion, in his Account: The cutting off a Dog's Neck, or the Offering of Swines Blood, for Sacrifice, were not more loathsome and detestable under the Old Testament, than human Inventions annexed to, or mingled in with divine Institutions are to him under the New.

As Parphar and Abana, Rivers of Damaskus, might be as good Water for washing away the Filth of the Flesh, as Jordan was, yet the Former wanting that

Word of divine Institution, which the latter had, they could not be used in Faith, in Order to Healing; nor was any Blessing from God to be expected on them for that End: Even so, though it were granted, that crossing, kneeling, prailing of God with Pipes and Whistles, religious kissing of Bibles in solemn Worship, jouking at Words and Sounds, making of religious Curtisies to Tables, or to the Sun-rising, (or the East) reading of Prayers to God, and reading of them Word about, &c. were as good in themselves as the doing otherways; yet these being destitute of so much as a Shadow of divine Institution, they can never be used in Faith of the divine Acceptance or Blessing. Yea, so far from it, that God, who knows, and never fails to call Things by their right Names, calls Corruptions in the Ordinances of his Worship, like unto these; he calls them, I say, spiritual Whoredom, Adultery, playing the Harlot, and committing of Lewdness with Strangers, &c.

If Man's Wisdom be once allowed to add or alter so much as one Loop or Pin, it will never be easy, or at rest, without the whole Tabernacle be new modelled, according to the Pattern in his own Head. And one cannot tell what may be the Consequences of, nor how much the Lord may be displeased with a very small Variation from the Pattern shewed in the Mount. The bearing of the Ark upon a New Cart, was as harmless and extrinsic an Innovation, as People could readily fall upon, in Reference to the House of God; yet, was it met with a very sensible Token of the divine Jealousy. Nor will good Meanings and Designs be sustained as any whit of an Apology for such officious Services, is but a cold one; namely, Who has required these Things at your Hands? For I commanded them not, nor came it so much as into my Mind.

As the Zeal of God's House consumed our Lord himself, and the typical David, both of them; so ought the same Spirit to be in all his Ministers specially: They ought to do what in them lies, by "Reformation and" a spiritual impartial Exercise of Discipline, to purge the House of God, 1 Tim. v. 20, 21 Tit. i. 13. and ii. 15. And to watch and withstand, from entering into it, all such Persons and Things, as, in the Book of the Manner of the House, have no Warrant to be there. For to them has the Son, who



is over his own House, committed, in Trust, the Ordinances and Order of it, with a solemn Charge to keep them pure and entire, without any the least Addition or Substraction, Mixture or Exchange of one Thing for another; Therefore, all such, be who they will, tho' they were even Kings or Parliaments. who would set up their Post by God's Posts, or their Threshhold by his Thresholds, to the defiling of his House, and of his holy Name, they must withstand, Ezek. xliii 8. Observable is that Word, — *For if thou lift up thy Tool upon it* (viz. the Stones of God's Altar, to hew, polish, or make them more slightly) *thou hast polluted it*, Exod. xx. 25.

The Ordinances are also committed to their Trust, to be by them, in a believing Dependance on him, kept up and maintained in their Power and spiritual Glory, without which they will prove but ineffectual to the great Ends of their Institution, and will fall under the Contempt of a carnal World. This was the Apostle Paul's great Care, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

Further he has committed in Trust to their keeping, his own royal Rights, Prerogatives, Dignities, in and about his House, as King of Zion: to be by them asserted, maintained and defended, against all Pretenders and Invaders whatsoever: These are they in no Case, be the Cost and Peril what it will, to surrender, part with, or drop, by ceasing to claim and own them, if they would not be found, and accordingly treated as Traitors to their Trust, and against his Crown and Dignity, as the alone King and Head of his Church.

To them likewise as Guardians, has he committed in Trust, the Rights and Privileges of his Children and People, the Church of Believers, to be for them preserved and maintained from the Invasions and Encroachments of all such as will, by Deceit or Violence, oppress, rob, or make a Prey of them.

To them has he also committed in Trust, their own Office, as Trustees in his House, that they may discharge it, and maintain it with the Rights and Privileges thereunto belonging, against all such as would enslave, or bring them into Bondage. The Power and Authority, their Lord has invested them with, they are to keep and hold themselves well contented with, using it for Edification, and not for Destruction;

Destruction; without thirsting, catching, or clambering for more, whether under the Notion of Negatives, or Positives: and all this as they would be approved and found faithful by their Lord at his coming. All this, and much more, belongs to the Second Branch of the Trust above-named, viz. The Institutions of Christ. But I come to the Third Branch of the Trust, namely,

III. His holy Commandments. The Gospel of Christ is a holy Gospel; the Doctrine of it is a Doctrine of Holiness; the Institutions of it are the Means of Holiness; the Promises of it are the sweetest and strongest Motives to Holiness; the Grace of it disposes and enables to Holiness; the Spirit whereof it is the Ministration, is a Spirit of Holiness; the glorious Author of it is the great Exemplar of Holiness, and the Commands of it require, and are the Rule of Holiness.

So though Believers be not under the Law in the Sense of the Holy Ghost, speaking by the Apostle Paul, yet are they not therefore Children of Belial, walking without Yoke. it is true, the most eminent of orthodox Divines, have held, that the Gospel taken properly and strictly (for the good News from Heaven. of Help in God through Jesus Christ, for lost undone self-destroying Sinners) had neither Precepts nor Threatenings belonging to it: yet there is no doubt of it (nor did they ever speak or mean otherwise) the Law of God is in the Gospel.

\* In no Sense indeed consistent with the Words of the Holy Ghost in Scripture (and what is not so, is no other than the *vain Babblings*, mentioned in the Text; let Men colour it as they will, or can) are Believers under the Law, as it is the Covenant of Works, whether commanding or condemning; whether as to Obedience, or as to Satisfaction: for Christ, as our Surety, having fully answered the Demands of the Law commanding, as well as of the Law condemning, it is clear, as writ with a Sun-Beam, that Believers in Christ cannot be under the Ten Commands, as they are the Matter of that Covenant, which being an Image of God's Holiness or Righteousness, can never be supposed to require that which would be Unrighteous, namely, a double Payment of the same Debt.† But though Matters stand thus betwixt Believers, and that Law-Covenant, yet are they

\* Rem. 4. †

they not therefore without Law to God, being *under the Law to Christ*; which is no other than what of Old the Lord promised to Moses, *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.* And—*whosoever will not hearken unto my Words which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him,* Deut. xviii. 18. 19. “It is no other than what was foretold by the Prophets, namely, that *the Law should go forth of Zion,* Isa. ii. 3. Micah iv. 2. It is no other than what the Father has, immediately from “Heaven with” his own Mouth, enjoined us, *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him,* Mat. xvii. 5. Hear him as the great Prophet revealing, teaching; hear him as the alone King and Law-giver of the Church, commanding; \*hear him only, hear him in *all Things,* Acts iii. 22. hear him always.†

\* And as it is the Father’s Will we should receive the Law from his Son’s Mouth; so the great Thing, our Lord expects and requires of his People and Followers, is, that they will so do; *If ye love me, keep my Commandments,* John xiv. 15. *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,* John xv. 14. Nor does the Commission of his Ministers extend any further, than to teach and require Men in his Name, to observe and obey whatsoever their Lord has commanded. Further, if the Doctrine of the Gospel be the Doctrine of Christ, and if the Doctrine of the Institutions of the Gospel be the Institutions of Christ, then must also the Commandments of the Gospel be the Commandments of Christ. And if he be the true supreme God equal with the Father, and also the Prophet of the whole Will of God, as certainly he is; the Father gives now no Laws nor Commands to the Church but by him; and who hear and obey him, they hear and obey the Father; for the Father is in him: on the other Hand, whoever refuses or demurs to hear him, being the sole Ambassador of Heaven, and having the whole Will, Name, Authority and Nature of God in him, he shall be cut off:—*Every Soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the People,* Acts iii. 23. †

\* Neither

Rem. 5. †



\* Neither, though as to Believers they be divested of the Law, Curse, or threatening of eternal Damnation in Case of every Failure, are the Commands of Christ therefore without Sanction: for *if his Children forsake his Law, and walk not in his Judgments, &c. then will he visit their Transgression with the Rod, &c.* Psal. lxxxix. 30. They shall be chastened of the Lord in some Cases so sharply, as not only to lose their Comfort, and the Light of their Father's Countenance, but so as to have the Influences of Grace withhold, so as to be left to fall under spiritual Judgments, to fall into Sin for the Punishment of former Sins, yea, their natural Life may go in the Cause, yet shall they not, for all that, be condemned with the World; *for this Cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep—But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World,* 1 Cor. xi. 30, 32. †

Now in receiving the Law from his Mouth who is Jehovah our Righteousness, we receive it from Jehovah, we receive it from our Creator, we receive it from the Great, the Supreme, the most High God, but clothing himself with, and revealing himself to us under the sweet and endearing Relation and Character of a God Redeemer. God forbid we, at this Time of Day, should, in Words or Manner of Speech, so much as seem to give the least Countenance to them who are, what in them lies, robbing our dearest Lord of his essential Glory, pulling him from his Throne, and treading his Crown and Honour in the Dust; or that we should so far incroach upon and betray the Privilege and Consolation of Believers. \* as to tell them, they must receive the Law from the Hand of God as Creator out of Christ: Which some from among ourselves have plainly enough intimated in their public Writings; † as also that the restricting Believers to receive the Ten Commands only at the Hands of Christ, is a Doctrine injurious unto the infinite Majesty of the sovereign Lord Creator, and to the Honour of his holy Law.—Antinom. of the Marrow detected, Page 88. 89.

Ah! Is he not our Sovereign Lord Creator and of infinite Majesty? Is not the New Testament full and frequent in telling us so much? particularly, John i. Col. i. Heb. i.

This

\* Rem. 6 †. \* Slander 8, †

This of his being our sovereign Lord Creator, is among the first Things we are told of him. How then can it be injurious to the Creator's Majesty, to receive the Law from the Creator's Mouth, revealing himself to us as our God Redeemer too? \* Nay, let me deal with a God out of Christ, and direct others to him who will, we, knowing him to be a consuming Fire to guilty Creatures, will and must say with holy Luther, We will shut our Eyes and Ears, we will neither hear, see, nor have to do with any other God, besides *God manifested in the Flesh*, even God in Christ, reconciling the World to himself. We are Christ's Ministers, let us hold by our Master; for our pleading the Case of an absolute God against him, we will have Thanks neither from him, nor from his Father.†

Now Christ's holy Commandments being both the Matter and the Rule of all Gospel Obedience, are a Part of the Trust committed to Timothy, and every one of Christ's Ministers, 1 Thess. iv. 2, 5, 18. 2 Thess. i. 8. These Commands of their Lord, are they, to declare, explain, proclaim, and bind upon the Soul and Conscience in his Name; enjoining, commanding, 1 Tim. iv. 11. exhorting, v. 7. and vi. 2. Tit. iii. 8, 14. admonishing, rebuking, charging, 1 Tim. v. 20. and vi. 17. according to them, "in all Points." In one Word, these holy Commands are they to set in Opposition to Sin in all its Shapes and Sizes, and with them are they to set forward and promote all Manner of holy Conversation and Godliness. And great Need there is of Diligence. Watching and Contending in this Matter: for a falling away from the Holiness of the Gospel, whereof the Commands are the Rule, tends to the Dishonour of Christ, stain our holy Profession, and hazards the eternal Salvation of Souls, no less than falling from its Doctrine or Institutions does. This is an Evil of a most spreading and extensive Nature; and which they who profess the Gospel are very obnoxious to: and though Commonness takes off much of the Sense of its Evil and Danger, yet such as under a Profession of the Gospel turn aside unto open and visible Profanity, being hardened thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin, are rarely recovered again to Repentance, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 22. Heb. vi. 4.

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That

\* Rem. 5. †

That one may be accepted of God "through Jesus Christ," notwithstanding several Errors and Mistakes of the Mind about spiritual Things, none will, I think, question: but that any who live and die impenitently, against the Rule and Terror of that Holiness which the Gospel teaches and requires, should ever see the Lord, none who truly fear him will dare to affirm. Yet it is clear from Scripture, but too manifest to Observation, in these our latter Times especially, that Men will, under an outward Profession of the Gospel, give themselves up to the Conduct, and to the gratifying of the vilest of Lusts: thereby crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open Shame: for it is only where Holiness is profest, and the Power of it evidenced in its Fruits, that Christ is glorified and honoured in the World. Then only is there a due Representation of the Gospel, and of its glorious Author, made to the Sons of Men, when his People shew forth in their Spirit and Walk the Power, Purity and Efficacy of his Doctrine, Institutions, Grace, and holy Law; and hereby he is glorified: but, when Men believe otherwise than the Gospel teaches, or live otherwise than it requires, there is not only a Treachery in the Trust, but, according to Measure of Defection from the Principles of Gospel Truth, or from the Rule of Obedience the Gospel prescribes, our Lord is exposed to Shame and Suffering anew: for it is only in his Gospel, in his Servants, Interest and Members, he can now suffer from the Sons of Men.

But besides the turning aside into a carnal, worldly, lukewarm, openly sinful and profane Course of Life, which Apostasy from that Holiness the Gospel indispensibly requires of all the Followers of Christ and that has sometimes been eminently conspicuous among them, is wofully manifest at this Day, among the Body of all Ranks of Persons, who bear the Name of Christ; besides this I say, there are many who turn aside from the Holiness of the Gospel, unto another Holiness, which yet is not another; because it is none at all. To say nothing of them, who put themselves to much Pain, in a strict Observance of the Commands and Traditions of Men, and, by multiplying unrequired Duties, make, even as did the Pharisees of Old, the Commandments of God of none effect, by their Traditions.

Some



Some, yea, not a few, they confine the whole of their Obedience to mere Morality, or such a Conformity of Life, to the Light of Nature, somewhat improved by the help of the Scriptures, as to be useful and improved among Men, which indeed Folk, by the Use and Improvement of their rational Faculties, without any special Aid of the Spirit and Grace of Christ, may do for the Love of Self, and yet never do any Thing that is accepted with God.

Others they apply themselves to the Study of legal Holiness, or a Course of Obedience, much the same for Substance with what the Gospel teaches, but proceeding from other Principles, and carried on by other Motives. These labour as in the Fire for Life, in Whole or in Part, by the Law; and being destitute of a supernatural Principle of living unto God, they, acting in all they do from Self, and to Self only, are their own *Alpha*, and their own *Omega*: The alone Springs of all their Motion, are the slavish Fear of Punishment, and the mercenary Hope of Reward. They being ignorant of the Ministry of Christ, of Righteousness, Life and Salvation in him for all, even the worst of Sinners, who, seeing their own Undoneness, and his glorious Excellency, and counting all their best Gains but Loss and Dung for him, betake themselves to him, as their alone and all-sufficient Saviour, believing on his Name for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption; and they being ignorant of the true Way of making continual Application to him by Faith, for Grace, and Supplies of his Spirit, to bring them into, and to preserve them in a State of Gospel Holiness; "they, I say, being ignorant of these," do but spend their Days in Vanity, and in End die Fools: for to the Loss of all their tedious, irksome Labour, is at last added the insupportable, irreparable Loss of their Souls.

\* This By-path of Bastard Holiness, is no other than a covered Way to Destruction, leading as directly and infallibly thither, as the open, broad Road of Profanity does. *For they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of God.* Rom. x.

3. † Sinners, partly through Pride, and partly through Ignorance, do not submit to the Righteousness of God, in

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Christ.

\* Rem 10. †

Christ. They know it not in its Glory, Compleatness, and Suitableness to the Holiness of God, as well as to their Nakedness and Guilt; therefore they dare not venture their Souls and their Salvation on it: Or else they see not their own absolute Need of it, their Undoneness without it, but think, if some small Allowance be made them, they may do their own Turn; and therefore, they will not submit to it; but go about to establish and prop up that lifeless, loathsome Carcase of their own Righteousness. But without submitting to the Righteousness of God, and a Life of Faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, for any to dream of being holy according to the Mind of God, is no other, than really and in Effect to renounce the Gospel.

And therefore, in keeping this Branch of the Trust, great Need will the Man of God have of Wisdom from above: As, to instance in a few Particulars only, there needs Wisdom.

1. To bind the holy Commands on People in their due Order: that is, as the Fiery Law ushers in Christ to the Soul, by discovering absolute Need of him and utter Undoneness without him; so is Christ to usher in his own Commands of the Gospel, if Sinners be not led to Christ, before they be yoked to the Work of Obedience, our preaching and pressing of Duties on Men, will, in Effect, be but the binding of heavy Burdens on their Shoulders, which they will never be able to stand, or walk out the Way under. Our Lord's Order is, *Come unto me and get rest to your Souls*, (viz. of the Way of believing) and then *take my Yoke upon you*, — Mat. xi. 28, 29. And here I cannot but take Notice of some dangerous Hints and Expressions, new and odd to be met with in our Divinity,\* as, that not Faith only, but Holiness is a Condition of our Union to Christ, and of being interested in his Treasures and spiritual Blessings promised † ‡ The very same with Sherlock's Doctrine, viz. "That a holy Life must at least, in Order  
" of Nature, go before our Union with Christ; because by  
" this we are united to him: and that we are not real living Members of Christ, till we first sincerely obey him."§

\* And

\* Slander 10, †

‡ Maxwell's Sermon before the Synod of Angus, &c. April 1720. Page 102. § Discourses of the Knowledge of Christ, &c. Page 349.

\* And, that all Christ has done for Sinners, will not profit them, without no Faith only, but Repentance, and holy sincere Gospel Obedience ||. Now if we must have these, e're we can get any Good of Christ, where shall we come by them? We have alwaye hitherto thought, that Repentance and holy Obedience, and even Faith too, came from Christ; and, that the two former were Fruits of our Union with him, by Means of Faith only †. But, to proceed, there needs Wisdom.

2. As to hedge People in from Licentiousness, and abusing the Doctrine of Free-grace on the one Hand, by spreading before them, and binding upon them the holy Commands, in their Spirituality and Extent; so on the other, to guard them off Legalism, (that is, a slavish, Bondage Frame of Spirit, in their Duties and Obedience) together with the subtil, secret and artful Workings of Self, disposing and prevailing with even the best sometimes, to trust to their own Duties and Obedience, in Whole or in Part, for Pardon, Acceptance, and the Obtaining of a Reward at God's Hand. Or, in one Word, as the Scripture Phrases it, to guard them against seeking Righteousness and Life, as it were, by the Works of the Law: For it is not an easy or common Attainment, to be diligent in all Manner of holy Obedience, as if we were to win Heaven thereby, and yet, when we have done all to reckon ourselves unprofitable Servants. Again, there needs Wisdom,

3. To bind on Christ's Yoke with his own Cords; Gospel Motives and Arguments I mean. And, Finally, the Man of God must be sure to send People, on all Occasions, to Christ and the free Promises of the Covenant; to get covenanted Grace and Strength in the Way of Believing, for the Performance of every Duty, for walking in the Way of Obedience, and for bearing of the Cross; all of them, in an evangelical Manner. For whatever is not wrought in us by the Grace of Christ, as well as wrought by us in a Way of Duty, is nothing a-kin to Gospel Holiness.

Without these, or the like, be duly adverted to, the urging and pressing upon Folk the Commands by themselves, will



will serve to little saving Purpose: For nothing is more dispiriting and deadning, than to set People a great Task, quite above their Strength, and that with Certification of the highest Pains in case of Failure, without so much as shewing them how it is possible for them to overtake it: This being indeed to require Brick without affording Straw. \* The Commands, it is true, are the Rule and Way of Holiness, but it is the Doctrine of the Gospel, proposed to Faith, which is the Channel of sanctifying Grace †. The Law, with all its Precepts and Terrors, was too weak, to stem the Tide of Sin in our Natures; which would needs, for all that it could do, have flowed and overflowed eternally, had not the Grace of the Gospel come and made that Red-Sea give back. It is certainly so, as that great Man of God, Professor Haliburton, says, One View of Forgiveness and pardoning Mercy, alienates the Soul more from Sin, than Twenty Sights, yea, Tastes of Hell ||.

Tho' therefore the pressing of moral Duties and good Works, be an important Part of the Trust committed, and such a Part, as is more acceptable to the Body of common Professors (as being better understood by them, and more suited unto their natural Light and Conceptions) than the preaching of Christ, and the Doctrines of the Gospel; the Necessity and Excellency of which, their dim Light cannot so well discover; yet must that be allowed its own proper Room and Place only, else, if it gets more, all is like to prove Labour in vain, and to be as one would build on the Sand without a Foundation; For it is the Mystery and Doctrine of the Gospel, which is the Root and Rise of true Holiness; as being the Ministration of the Spirit, and the Power of God, to Salvation.

Some, thro' not adverting to this, have betaken themselves to the preaching and pressing of Duties, or moral Virtue, as their great Task and Trust; and so, at length, have dropt Christ (that is, the Glories of his Person and Offices, his Righteousness, Grace, Meditation, complete Fulness, &c.) all but the Name, out of the Gospel. May the Lord, of his Mercy, keep us from splitting on that Rock. Two Things have generally prevailed with Men, to take this Way of it.

1. They

\* *Rem. 2. †* || *Memoirs of his Life, P. 196.*

1. They thought the Honour of God was not sufficiently provided for, by the Doctrine of Free-grace, which bestows all on the Sinner freely, \* upon his believing on the Name of the Son of God; without his doing any thing in the first Place, to obtain Salvation at God's Hand †. \* Therefore, they thought it necessary, and becoming the Honour of God, that the Sinner should do something for himself, if not in a Way of Merit, yet in the Way of Condition, Qualification, &c. before God should bestow Pardon of Sin, Christ, &c. upon him †.

But if such People had duly considered, either the infinite Purity, and essential Holiness of God's Nature, the Spirituality, Rigour and Severity of his holy Law, or the glorious Perfection and Suitableness of Christ's Righteousness, for answering to both the one and the other, they might easily have seen, how sorrily the Honour of God would be provided for, by the Piecing too of their filthy Rags to Christ's Righteousness, for making it a complete Robe; and much worse, by their substituting the one in Room of the other.

2. ¶ They thought it necessary, to ascribe somewhat to Man's own Righteousness and Works, in Point of Justification and Salvation, for the Maintenance of Holiness and Righteousness, in the World †. For, thought they, if Sinners be allowed to expect all by Christ, and Free-grace, in the Way of believing, as above, without any doing of their own, for that End, they will certainly cast at Holiness, and live loosely. But, so far has this Mean been from reaching the End it was designed for, that ever as this Opinion of a Righteousness by Works of our own, grew in the Church, Licentiousness of Life, Unholiness, Unrighteousness, and all Manner of Abominations, grew proportionally up with it. Thus it has been from the Days of the Pharisees, downward, thro' all Churches; the Church of Rome, to instance, and, may I not add, the Church of England too? And thus it will be to the End of the World, the Opinion of Self-righteousness, and Looseness of Conversation, will go Hand in Hand. Why it is so, yea, and must be so, would not be hard, if it was needful, to account for. \* Whereas the Doctrine of Free-

Free-grace, as was before observed, where it is believed and embraced, tho' it ascribes all to Christ, and leaves Man nothing to do in the Way of obtaining, never fails, nor can it fail of bringing forth true Holiness of Heart and Life †.

III. How, and by whom this Trust is committed to Timothy, and other Ministers, in their several Generations.

I. It is committed, originally and principally, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Ghost. The Trust, the *Depositum* is His; and to him it belongs to dispose of it, to trust it with, to commit it unto whomsoever he will. To him alone, as the sole King and Head of his Church, who has all Power and Authority in Heaven and Earth lodged in him, for that End, does it belong, to institute Ordinances in his House, give forth Laws, appoint Officers, to assign their Qualifications, to set them their Work, to give them their Instructions for the Management of it; and from no other must they receive them, else are they the Servants, not of Jesus Christ, but of Men. He is that Nobleman, who is gone into a far Country, to receive for himself a Kingdom, and to return; who, having called his Servants, and delivered unto them his Goods, said to them all, and to every one of them, *Occupy till I come*, Matth. xxv. Luke xix. We have also his Conveyance of this Trust to Ministers, — *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*, John xx. 21. *Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them, — teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you*, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*, Mark xvi. 15. By the Holy Ghost also is this Trust committed; *Take Heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you Overseers* — Acts xx. 28. He, as *Prorox* or Viceroy in the mediatory Kingdom, acting for and from Christ, has a great Concern and Efficiency in the committing of this Trust; he disposes the Person towards the great Office; he qualifies with a Measure of spiritual Gifts and Abilities, for the faithful Discharge of it; he, by touching the Hearts of Men, points out the Person to be called forth, and set apart for this very Purpose, of keeping the Trust in the Sense of the Text; and without they



they provoke or grieve him, he becomes their Guide, Teacher, Assistant and Comforter, in the whole Undertaking."

2. It is committed ministerially and instrumentally, by them who ordain and set them apart, as also by them who elect and call them to the keeping of the Trust in a particular Charge. "That not only they who are already constitute Keepers of the Trust, but likewise the Church of Believers, have a Lot and Share in this important Business of committing the Trust to such an one's keeping, is evident, not only from Scripture, Acts i. 23, 26. and vi. 3, 5. and xiv. 23. &c. But from Reason and Nature's Light: So that, without a People's Election or Consent, a Pastoral Relation cannot emerge, nor can a Man have any Right or Warrant to keep the Trust among them, as their Pastor. This is a Part of their Birth-right, as they are Believers and Church-Members, which neither they ought to part with, nor Ministers to suffer them to be oppressed in: For, *to oppress a Man in his Heritage, to turn aside the Right of a Man, before the Face of the most High, or to subvert him in his Cause, the Lord approveth not.* In this Matter of committing the Trust to one's keeping, among a particular Flock, neither Pope, Prelate nor Patron, have any Part or Lot from the Lord: And therefore, whoever gives any of them Countenance in such vicious Intromissions, will be found in so far unfaithful to their Trust: For this being a Part of the Purchase of Christ's Blood, Robbers and Highway-Men of the World ought to be held for but little Criminals, in Comparison with Robbers and Oppressors of this Sort. Yet is not the Power and Authority of Gospel Ministers, for keeping of this Trust, derived from either them who elect them, or from them who ordain them; but only from Christ, in whom all Church Power is originally and solely vested by the Father; Their Election and Ordination being no other than instituted Means, or Channels of conveying Authority and Office-Power, from Christ the Head, unto the Person called. The Power is indeed *by*, not *from* the Church; as if it was any Efflux of an Authority formally residing in either Officers or Members, as Subjects recipient of it: For such a Grant of Church-Power our Lord never made unto any; as that they might authorita-

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tively collate and dispose of it to others, to be used and held of them, as they should see Cause. Church-Officers having it by Delegation from Christ, they cannot delegate it unto others: But it is conveyed immediately from Himself, by and through all such Means as he has been pleased to appoint."

3. It is committed in and by the holy Scriptures, as the Charter of their Office, as the Record and Register of their Commission and Instructions. "The Word of the Gospel, or the Orders and Constitutions of Christ therein, may be called, morally, or in some such Sense, the first Recipient, Seat or Subject of all Church-Power from Christ, as Mat. xvi. 19. and xviii. 18. herein and hereby does the Holy Ghost speak to us, invest us with the Trust, and give us all our Instructions anent the keeping of it: In one Word, by these is the *Man of God made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works*, 2 Tim. iii. 17.

4. It is committed, or rather transmitted down from proceeding Generations of Believers, faithful Ministers, and Martyrs: Who, by their believing, professing, confessing of it, contending for it, and sealing it with their Blood, kept and held it fast that so it might descend unto us; recommending, and by their Example beseeching and charging us to do the like, as for other Reasons, so for the Sake of the Generations to succeed us. "We may allude to Psalm lxxviii. *We have heard and known, and our Fathers have told us; We will not hide from their Children, shewing to the Generation to come, the Praises of the Lord, and his Strength, and his wonderful Work that he hath done; for he hath established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers, that they should make known to their Children: That the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their Children: That they might set their Hope in God, and not forget the Works of God, but keep his Commandments*, Ver. 3.—7.

The present Generation are appointed Keepers of the Trust, not only for the Lord, but also for their Sake who are to come next, into whose Hands they are carefully to commit it sound and intire, as it came unto them from

from their Fathers; That so his Name might be remembered to all Generations, and there never may be wanting a Seed to do him Service, who shall be accounted to the Lord for a Generation. Our Fathers, those of them, I mean, who kept the Charge of the Lord, when the Body of the Land went astray from him, they, I say, mindful of this according to Deut. vi. 7. were not wanting to us their Children: How little soever they had to leave us besides, they would not leave us without the Trust sound and incorrupt. They could not think of it, that we should be blessing an Idol after they were gone; therefore stood they not at parting with Possessions, Liberties, yea, and Life itself, for the Sake of the Trust, and that we might inherit it. May the Children, who are yet unborn, have as good Reason, when we are gone, to rise up and call us blessed."

IV. The Qualities of the Trust may easily be gathered out of what is already said above.

1. It is a divine heavenly Trust; it is so, in respect of its Original, it was brought and committed to us from above; it is so, in respect of its Author and Proprietor, being committed by a divine Person; for it is the Gospel of the blessed God, of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: It is so, in respect of its own Nature, being a Trust of Things divine and heavenly; the Doctrine is divine, the Institutions are divine, the Commandments are divine: It is so, in respects of its Design and Tendency, &c. in respect of its Virtue and Efficacy; it being the Power of God to Salvation.

2. It is a goodly, great and precious Trust. *That good Thing committed unto thee* (or that fair and lovely Depositum) keep — 1 Tim. i. 14. It is a Trust of inestimable Price; all the Silver and Gold, Pearls and other precious Things of the Creation of God, are but as Dross and Dung in Comparison with it: For the Pearl of great Price, the unsearchable Riches of Christ, all the Fulness of the Godhead belongs to it. It is good and great in itself, it is good and great in its Effects and Consequences. This Trust is the Glory of the Father and of Christ, it is the Wonder and Admiration of Angels, it is the Life and Salvation of Men, it is Light, Health and Joy to the World: For in it, and by it, is Life and Immortality, after they had



been lost and buried in Darkness, brought to Light again. Satan's Trust, he gives the Wicked and the Worldling a keeping, is an ugly, a lothsome, and at best but a base and mean Trust: But this is indeed a good Trust, and well may they who are possessed of it say, *The Lines are fallen to me in pleasant Places*: For I have a goodly Heritage.

3. It is an honourable Trust. "The Trust being so glorious and inestimable in itself, it cannot but be honourable to be invested with the Charge of keeping it." To be Keepers of the great Seal, to be over the Treasury, to be Secretaries of State, or to represent the Royal Person in the most solemn Embassies among Men, are but mean Posts when compared with this, though the World reckons not so; because they seek Honour one of another, and not the Honour that comes from God: Hence with them any Office, almost is held more honourable than that of the Ministry; though if their Commissions, Designations, the holding of their Offices, the Matter of their several Trusts, with the Reward that is insured to follow a faithful Discharge of the same, were compared, the Odds would soon be evident. In a false or a corrupt Church also, the Ministry is ever held more honourable (even not below People of the best earthly Extract) than in the true; for Reasons that are obvious enough: Among others, the Work is too much and the Wages too small in the Latter, for the Support of worldly Pomp, and the indulging of other carnal Affections. But the FATHER, as one observes, though he had but one Son, he made a Minister of him, in the worldly Circumstances, of all other the least engaging. Solomon makes the Preacher his first Title of Honour, even before that of King of Jerusalem. With the Apostle Paul, Servant of Jesus Christ, yea, even Prisoner of Christ, was held for a more glorious Designation than all the Roman Emperors Titles of Honour: And every faithful Minister will see Reason for saying, *What am I*, or what my Father's House, that I should have been allowed of God, to be put in Trust with the Gospel, 1 Thess. ii. 4.

4. It is a weighty and difficult Trust. "The keeping of it, in the Sense of the Text, will appear to be so, when we come to consider of what belonged to it. The Enemies and Ill-willers of the Trust are many; their Designs and Attacks upon it, and such as have it in keeping

ing, sometimes formidable, and other-whiles so subtile and  
 covered that they are hard to be discovered and defeat;  
 they have Flesh and Blood, Principalities and Powers,  
 &c. the Power and Policy, the Crafts and Cruelty of  
 Devils and Men to guard and defend the Trust against;  
 particularly, they have the stubborn and perverse Lusts  
 of Men to give Battle to: sometimes they are obliged  
 to be the Aggressors, in which Case they have not only  
 Self at home to deal with (which needs to be staved to  
 every Thing that is faithful, especially when it appears  
 painful or dangerous) but they may reckon on both a  
 warm Reception, and a lasting Resentment; other-whiles  
 they have to bear the Shock of their violent Assaults:  
 for all which they have no Sufficiency either of Wisdom  
 or Strength in themselves. Hence are they often so put  
 to it, that they know not what to do, being ready to  
 give up both the Trust and themselves for lost. What  
 a Plunge do we find the great Apostle at sometimes,  
 2 Cor viii. 9 and xi. 21.—27. 2 Tim. iv. 16. And  
 the Prophet Jeremiah, *Wo is me, my Mother, that thou*  
*hast born me a Man of Strife and of Contention to the*  
*whole Earth,* Isa. liii. 1. and xx. 14. They have the  
 Trust to trade with, and improve for their Lord's Hon-  
 our, and for the saving good of Souls: and here again  
 their Discouragements, great and many, with their Un-  
 successfulness, and make them ready to cry out with Is-  
 aiah, *I have laboured in Vain, I have spent my Strength*  
*for nought,* Isa. xlix. 4. *for who hath believed our Re-*  
*port?* Jer. xv. 10. And with Jeremiah. *O that I had in*  
*the Wilderness a Lodging Place of Wayfaring Men,* that  
 I might leave my People and go from them.—Jer.  
 ix. 2. All which, if duly considered, cannot fail to make  
 one cry with the Apostle, *Who is sufficient for these*  
*Things?* 2 Cor. ii. 16."

5. It is a sealed Trust. And therefore it may not, it  
 must not in ever so little be altered, else it is vitiate and  
 marred; for it cannot be mended. "It is the Result of  
 infinite Wisdom and Counsel: And though the Plan of  
 it lay before God from Eternity, he saw nothing in it  
 that needed the least Alteration or Amendment: And  
 now that it is given forth, he has sworn, that Heaven  
 and Earth shall sooner pass away than one *Jet* of it shall

" be

“ be changed. Therefore may it no wise be bended or  
 “ accommodated to Times, Persons or Circumstances.  
 “ For, it is sealed also, not only with the Blood of Mar-  
 “ tyrs, but with the Blood of its glorious Author; the  
 “ Blood of Christ being both the Price of its Purchase, and  
 “ the Seal whereby it is immutably confirmed and esta-  
 “ blished ”

V. Why is such a weighty and important Trust put into Hands so weak and unskilful as ours are ?

1. This is done partly in Condescension and Compassion to Sinners, whom this Trust concerns, and is sent to. “ For, ever since Man became a Criminal against Heaven, he has had a mighty Dread and Jealousy of every Messenger that came from thence; fearing he was either a Messenger of Death, or come at least with one bad Design or other against him: Therefore, since we are not able to bear the Presence or Address of more glorious Ambassadors, has the Lord, in Compassion to us, committed the Trust to Men of like Passions with ourselves, whose Dread shall not make us afraid.”

2. We have this Treasure in such earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of the Creature, 2 Cor. iv. 7. and that all the Glory of the Efficacy and Success of this Trust may appear due, and of right belonging unto him. “ If Angels had been the Persons, much readily would been ascribed to their Wisdom, Power and other Excellencies of their Nature; yea, if even Men of worldly Honour, Power, Authority, Wisdom and Learning were ordinarily employed, God might be a Loser in his Glory by it; therefore does he for most Part choose the foolish, the weak, the base and despised Things of the World, to confound the Wise, the Mighty and the Honourable; that no Flesh should glory in his Presence, 1 Cor. i. 27. — 29. When the Walls of Jericho fell by the sounding of Rams Horns, it was an evident Token the Presence and Power of God was there.”

3. Our Lord will have Reprisals made on Satan and his Kingdom, by means even of these very People whom he had subdued, ruined and destroyed; that so his Defeat may be the more shameful and ignominious. “ It cannot but cut the great Red Dragon, Lucifer the Son of Pride, to  
 “ the



“ the Heart, that they who were once his own Slaves,  
 “ should overcome and drive forth of their strong Holds,  
 “ him and his Angels, by the Blood of the Lamb, and the  
 “ Word of their Testimony.”

4. For the Security, Encouragement and Confidence of Sinners, has he put this Trust into the Hands of such, as have the same common Interest and Concern in it with themselves; and who for their own, as well as for the Sake of others, are obliged to keep it, and to be faithful in the Management of it. “ Ministers have Souls to save, and  
 “ which can be saved in no other Way but that they are  
 “ to point out to others: Now, if Timothy did not keep  
 “ the Trust faithfully in Reference to others, if he took  
 “ not heed to himself, as to save them that heard him,  
 “ 1 Tim. iv. 16. What better Security can one have of a  
 “ Manager than this, if he wrongs me, he is sure to be the  
 “ Loser himself, or of a Steward, than if he poisons me, he  
 “ is sure to poison himself too?

“ 5. This Dispensation is likewise ordered for the Trial  
 “ of Peoples Faith, Love and Obedience; namely, whe-  
 “ ther they will welcome and entertain the Message for the  
 “ Author’s Sake, or if they will reject it for the Bearer’s  
 “ Sake. For, if we receive it not for his Sake, and for its  
 “ own Sake, though the Messenger were as mean as an Ass,  
 “ he values not yea, he despises our Regard to it on other  
 “ Accounts whatsoever. It was much to the Honour of  
 “ the Thessalonians, and a good Proof of their Faith, that  
 “ they received the Gospel at the Hands of the Apostles,  
 “ not as the Word of Men but as it is in Truth, the Word  
 “ of God, 1 Thess. ii. 13. And indeed it is given as a Piece  
 “ of the Saints Character, *That a little Child shall teach*  
 “ *them*, Isa. xi. 6.” The

Second Head of the Explication was Timothy and every Minister’s Duty in Reference to it, or the keeping of it. And, 1. Of the Keeping. And then, 2. A Word of the Manner,—Of the keeping of this Trust we may take these Three different Views.  
 And,

I. We may view it in its several Branches, or the different Actings that belong to it. And,

1. It belongs in the first Place, to the keeping of this Trust, that one give all Diligence *to be apprized and possess-*  
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*ed of it.* The Word, here translated *keep*, is, Luke xii. 15. rendered *possess*. And indeed, how is it possible for one to keep a Thing, without he once get it into his Custody and Possession? For, though a Person may have the Charge of an Affair, yet, if one knows not the Nature, Value, Excellency, Extent, and other Concerns of it, how can he ever fulfil his Charge? No doubt, it may sometimes be with Ministers as it is with People of the World, who, at their first coming into Posts, have very little Judgment about them: So, if one be ignorant of the Counsel of God, how shall he make it known? How shall a Man keep what he never had? When Men either want Ability, or are unwilling to be at Pains in the Use of Means, to search into the Mystery of the Doctrine of Christ, the Trust cannot be kept, but must be misguided, and many will perish for lack of Knowledge. For this Reason it is, that Reading and Meditation are recommended to Timothy, as a Branch of his keeping of the Trust, 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

As Apollos, though an eloquent Man, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in Spirit, and very diligent in keeping the Trust, needed notwithstanding to have expounded unto him the Way of God more perfectly, Acts xviii. 26. so need Ministers to be daily learning and prying into the Trust (which the Angels themselves think not below them to be our Fellow-Students in, 1 Pet. xii. and what it is they owe unto it. It is not only a Notion of it in their Heads, they must see to have, which yet is itself a great Matter, to have it sound, clear and distinct (through the want of which, Men otherwise honest may do great Wrong to the Trust) but also the sensible Relish and Experience, with the powerful Impression of it on their Hearts.

2. This Trust being a Stewardship it is not kept, in the Sense of the Text, without it be *diligently and wisely dispensed to others*. The Treasure is committed, not to be hid and concealed, as the slothful Servant kept his one Talent, but for Communication; to be dealt out liberally and seasonably to others, as well as to be freely used and enjoyed by the Keepers themselves: Provided always, that, in all their Distributions, they give it forth pure and entire, without Adulteration or Addition. As good Nurses of Souls, they must yield them the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. "As good Stewards

Stewards of the manifold Grace of God, are they to minister the Gift, as they received it, to all about them, 1 Pet. iv. 10." As Scribes instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven are they, like the Man that is an Householder, to be ever bringing forth out of this Treasure Things new and old, for the feeding of many, Matth. xiii. 52.

The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are committed to their Trust, and they must cast open Heaven's Door of Free-grace, and invite all without Distinction "or Exception" to come in; assuring them, there is Room, Welcome and Entertainment for them: "Yea," they are to "constrain and" compel People to come in; to come in to Christ, to God in Christ; come into God's Family, to God's Covenant in the Way of Believing.

For by all Means must they take Care, lest their Lord should have that Complaint of them he made of the Scribes and Pharisees of old, that they took away the Key of Knowledge, shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men, would neither go in themselves, nor suffer them that were entering, to go in, Luke xi. 15.—*Them that were entering in ye hindered*, Matth. xxiii. 13. And how? Not by failing to require Duties enough of them; for they bound on heavy Burdens, they did not touch with one of their own Fingers: They break their Backs with the heavy Loads of Covenant of Works Holiness, that they required them to bear; a Righteousness of their own to obtain Heaven with, I mean. It is true, they made the Law, in many Instances, easier than really it was, by their lax Interpretations (and indeed it has ever been the Way of all Legalists, them who seek Righteousness and Life, by their own Obedience I mean, to narrow and abridge the Commands, as to their Spirituality and Extent; for a very evident Reason, namely, That they might make the Task possible and tolerable to themselves) for they had an Overweight of Traditions to lay on with it: Yet that was not the main nor the worst of their shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven. "No, for" they lockt and kept shut the true and genuine Sense of Moses and the Prophets, as they pointed at a spiritual Saviour; they folded up the Promises and Grace of the Covenant, without proposing them to Faith; they corrupted or obscured all these Scriptures, that led to the saving Knowledge and Faith of



Christ, and did what they could to hinder People from owning and believing in Jesus of Nazareth, as the promised Messias, when he appeared.

So, if one does not preach Christ, and Life, and Salvation in him to the worst of Sinners, though he should otherwise, which, no doubt, a Man may do, preach sound Doctrine all his Days, he takes away the Key of Knowledge, and shuts the Kingdom of Heaven against Sinners, in the Sense of our Lord's Words. Yea, not only may a Man preach sound Doctrine, without preaching of the Gospel, but he may preach many Things, well, about Christ, yet never preach Christ in the Sense of the New Testament.

Whosoever then would keep the Trust, must mind to set open the Door of the Kingdom of Heaven, to the worst of Sinners. Upon some indeed, he must shut the Door to Church Privileges, but upon none "may he shut" the Door to Christ and Free-grace. "No;" But in a diligent and faithful Dispensation of the Word and Sacraments, is he plentifully to deal forth, and scatter abroad the Doctrine of Christ, "his Person and Offices," his Free-grace, and of his exuberant, overflowing Fulness to all, "to be received, believed and applied every one to himself in particular." For this Treasure, this Trust committed to him, is like the Widow's Oil, that could never be diminished by giving forth; *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth*, hold true here, "in respect of him that dispenseth." And in this Dispensation of the Word and Doctrine, is he to labour with Care and Diligence, to the utmost of his Strength, even to Weariness, Acts vi. 4. 1 Thess. v. 12. 1 Cor. xvi. 16. 1 Tim. v. 17. For the Souls of Men are not easier, and with less Pains saved now, than in the Apostle's Days they were; and to accompany and follow all with constant Prayer, that the Word, in his own Ministry especially, may run and prosper.

3. There belongs unto it, an exact Conformity unto, or their being delivered into the very Mould and Likeness of that Trust, in their own Persons. "For" it being their great Business, to get their Hearers cast or delivered into the Form of the Doctrine of Christ, Rom. iv. 17. or to be as it were anew, "a living" Edition of the Gospel,

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an Epistle of Christ, writ by the Power, and Grace of the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor. iii. 3. They must give them a Pattern of this in themselves; letting People see the Power, Glory and Efficacy of that Doctrine, they preach to others, exemplified in their own Hearts and Lives; Else, if they do not "thus" keep it in their own Persons, do they not keep it in the Sense of the Text. Yea, be Ministers Doctrine ever so sound, if they do not, in Spirit and Walk, manifest their own Belief of the Truths and Conformity to the Precepts of Christ, they do in Effect "but" tell People, the whole is no other than a Lie, a cunningly devised Fable: Therefore it is, that the Apostle insists so much on this with Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 12. and vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 22. and iii. 10. and with Titus, Tit. ii. 7, 8. see also 1 Thess. ii. 10, &c. "For so ought they to walk that their People, in following them, may be Followers of the Lord, 1 Thess. i. 6. It is not enough, they lay not Stumbling-blocks before People, by their evil Works, but besides, they must in all Things, shew themselves Patterns of good Works. This of being Ensamples to the Flock, is much insisted on, and much Weight is laid on it by the Holy Ghost, Tit. ii. 2. 1 Pet. v. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 1. Philip. iii. 17."—And of this same Import and Design, are all the Qualifications required of Ministers, as to their Spirit and Conversation, in these Epistles, and elsewhere; namely, because, without them, they are but Betrayers of the Trust in many Respects, as might be shown.

When Ministers in their Persons, Walk, and in all their Ways, give a true Representation of the Doctrine they preach, and of Him whose Name they carry to others, in Meekness, Humility, Self-denial, Readiness for the Cross, Zeal for the Glory of God, Mortification of corrupt Affections, and inordinate Desires, Condescension, Patience, &c. Then do they practically, and indeed keep the Trust. For People can read the Language of this, and will credit it as much too, as they will do their preaching. As People seldom affect to be wiser than their Teachers, so they will not soon see a Reason, why they should be better than they, or walk in any other Paths than what they tread before them. Eli's Sons; though punctual enough in their Temple Service, yet betrayed the Trust, in that from them went forth Lewdness and Looseness into all the

Land When the Stewards are such as Mat. xxiv. 48. 50 what must the Family be? For, it is not with Ministers, as with Men of other Employments: One may be a good Physician, a good Lawyer, a good Soldier, &c. though but an ordinary Sort of Man otherwise: "But the Minister who betrays his Profession, by an unsuitable Life, be his other Qualifications what they will, of all Creatures, next to Satan, serves the Interest of Hell most: In regard so many wretched Souls break their Necks on the bad Example he sets them."

4. The Maintaining and defending of the Trust, is another Branch of that keeping, the Text requires of Ministers, with Reference to it. Every Christian ought, as there is Need and Occasion, and as they have Ability, though orderly and wisely, yet earnestly to contend for the Faith, once delivered to the Saints, Jude, Verse 3. But Ministers much rather, who by Office are set Guardians to it. Being set for the Defence of the Gospel. Meekness and Patience in their own Concerns, is their Glory; but, when the Glory of God and their Saviour is at Stake, or his Interests any Way endangered, for them to be patient, tame and easy, is their Shame: And, however it may be accounted, by a carnal and careless Generation, even of Professors, with whom zealous Ministers, especially have ever been Madmen, Fire-brands, Pest and Troublers of Israel; However it may be such, I say, he held for Moderation and Prudence, it is really no other than Treachery in their Trust. They are Dumb Dogs indeed, who, tho' they can bite the Children, will not bark when the Thieves are about, or entering into the House. Ministers of all Men, ought the least to be afraid or ashamed of coming into the Field, when the Cause in the Service and Defence of which they are set, calls for their Appearance: For whoever, being listed under the Banner of Truth, consults either his Name, his Ease or his Safety, when an Assault is made on the Faith, is like to be found either a Coward in his Profession, or a Traitor to it.

Truth, it is true, is still the more amiable and attractive, that it is matched with Peace, for they are both of them Legacies, left us by our dearest Lord, who, as he is the Truth, so he is our Peace: Yet if they must be severed, there is no Room for Hesitation, which we ought to



to choose. And it is certain, that according to our Love and Experience of the Truth, so will our Zeal for it be: Yet in our zealous Contendings so it, ought we to be watchful, that we do not borrow Fire from the Father of Lies, who will not be wanting to offer his Assistance, and that the Flesh, like Zarah, puts not forth its Hand, with or before the Spirit. For, as they who make quit of Truth, or injure it in any Instance, do in so far really sap the Foundation of Peace; so they, who maintain and pursue Truth, are in Danger of forgetting that Regard which is due to Peace: Therefore ought Ministers to take good Heed, as on the one Hand, that under the Pretence of Truth, they do not broach Quarrels; so, on the other, that, under the Pretence of Peace, they do not betray Truth.

No doubt, were carnal Self more adverted to, and overcome in "these Matters," our Enquiries after Truth, and our Contendings for it, would on all Sides be more spiritual, and more successful, both of them: Yet "does it not cease to be true, what" one says well "of this Head, namely," he neither breaks God's Peace, nor the King's Peace, nor the Churches Peace, who, having a Calling, reproves Sin, or witnesseth for Truth; provided still he does it orderly, and with a Gospel Spirit. Which brings to Mind the judicious Observe of an eminent Divine, on that Text, *Have Sal. in yourselves, and have Peace, one with another*, Mark ix. 50. viz. That without the Salt of divine Grace, and gospel Truth, believed and entertained in ourselves, to work our corrupt Dispositions, and to prevent Putrifaction, our Peace, one with another, will be no other than as the Peace of a Dunghill, where each Part serves only to corrupt its Fellows. *Maledicta sit ea Concordia, quæ non nisi veritatis, & Regni Christi prejudicio, damnoque statui potest. i. e.* Let that Agreement be accursed, which, without Loss to Truth, and prejudice to the Interests of Christ, cannot be accomplished, says Musculus. "But to return,"

This Trust none will deny, Ministers are, by the Charge laid on them in the Text, obliged to maintain and defend, against as well the inadvertent and undesigned Attacks of Friends (thus Paul himself alone withstood Peter, Barnabas, and many others with them, engaged in a dangerous, though

though an unthinking Compliance, Gal. ii. 11. — 14. as against the industrious and ill-designed Attacks of Enemies: And that, whether they be more hidden and covered, or manifest and avowed. This Vindication and Defence of the Trust they are to manage with all the Care and Diligence, Zeal and Faithfulness, with Head, Heart and Hand, with Tongue and Pen, according as they are called and in Capacity for it; standing fast in *one Spirit, and with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel*, “being in nothing terrified by their Adversaries, Phil. i. 27, 28.” That the glorious Doctrine be preserved pure and uncorrupted (else, if any Worm corrode this Root, the Fruit of gospel Holiness, and the Power of Godliness, will soon wither and fade) and that Christ’s Disciples and Memoirs may neither, through Weakness or Ignorance, as Children, nor through the Slight of Seducers, be turned off from it, nor made unsettled in it. This is one Piece of their Warfare, of the good Fight, “in which they ought to shew themselves valiant for the Truth,” *to whom we give Place by Subjection, no not for an Hour, that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with you, Gal. ii. 5.* This is one great End of their Office; *he gave Gifts unto Men, — that we henceforth be no more Children tossed to and fro, Eph. iv. 8. — 14. Take heed therefore — to all the Flock — for I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous Wolves enter, — also of your own selves shall Men arise, speaking perverse Things, &c. Acts xx. 28. — 30.* See also 1 Tim. i. 3. Tit. i. 9, 13. And accordingly we find Paul often disputing for the Faith, Acts ix. 29, and xv. 2. and xvii. 17. and xix. 8, 9. This is to guard the Trust, and to herd the Flock from the Wolves. And, on the Discharge of this Piece of their Office, does, “under the divine Blessing” the Growth, Comfort and Edification of the Body, “sometimes especially,” much depend.

5. Another Branch of the keeping, they owe the Trust, is, *to suffer for their adhering to it, and maintaining of it.* Their Call to this Suffering is clear, when it is avoidable no Way, without they will wrong the Trust in more or in less: In which Case the Bonds of the Gospel prove the Keeping and the Security of the Gospel. For, when Ministers, for the Sake of the Trust, suffer Trouble as evil Doers, even unto Bonds, then is the Word of God not bound,

bound, 2 Tim. ii. 9. "The Faithful Servant of Christ, if ever, is like to speak boldly, as he ought to speak, when he is once *Ambassador in Bonds*, Eph. vi. 20." But when Ministers make "any" the least sinful Compliance, to evade Suffering, though it may have the Shew of saving both themselves and the Gospel, yet, whatever be their Pretences to the contrary, the Word of the Gospel, is from that Day, bound in one Respect or another: And, a Thousand to One, but the Word of God is corrupted by them, and handled deceitfully in one Instance or other. "See Mal. ii. 8, 9.—*But have been partial in the Law.*"

This was one main Way the Apostle Paul kept the Trust: As we may see, 2 Tim. i. 12. and ii. 9, 10. and iii. 10.—12. and iv. 5. &c. "And Phil. ii. 17. in Allusion to the Libation of Wine and Oil poured out on the Sacrifices under the Law, he speaks of his being offered or poured forth, upon the Sacrifice and Service of their Faith, as what would be one of the greatest Confirmations and Establishments of it. And here, I think, it cannot be amiss to cite a Passage from a learned and famed Writer of the Church of England, who having shewed how much they are mistaken, that think there can be no fit Matter of Martyrdom in a State, authorizing the Profession of the true Religion, and having declared that the Ministers of the Gospel, may deny Christ, or manifest their being ashamed of the Gospel by not opposing his Word, as they ought, unto the Sins of Men, he adds as follows, "That any Age, since the Christian Religion was first propagated, hath wanted Store of Martyrs, is more to be attributed unto the Negligence, Ignorance and Hypocrisy, or want of Courage in Christ's Ambassadors, or appointed Pastors, than unto the Sincerity, Mildness or Fidelity of the Flock, especially of the Bell-Weathers, or chief Ring-Leaders."

6. Another Piece of Keeping, that by the Text every Minister, as Timothy did, owns the Trust, is, their committing of it, for its safe Transmission to Posterity unto faithful Hands. *The same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also*, 1 Tim. ii. 2.—Where the same kind of Word is used, with that in the Text, which expresses the Trust, their Qualifications we

see,



See, who are to be trusted with this Trust, are reduced to two Generals, *Capacity* and *Integrity*; *faithful Men,—able to teach others.*

“ Since then though the Prophets do not live for ever, the Ministry must live while the World lasts, it should be Ministers Care, for the sake of the Trust, and of the Church, to look out for such to succeed them, as may be able to feed the Flock with Knowledge and Understanding, and of whom it may be hoped, that they will be faithful in doing of it: Else can they not expect to be found faithful themselves; and Posterity, will be apt to judge what we have been, by the Disposition and Complexion of those we leave behind us.

The licensing and ordaining of Men to the holy Ministry, being for certain, a Matter of the last Consequence to the Souls of Men, and to the keeping of this Trust, ought therefore, by Ministers and Judicatories, to be gone about with the utmost Circumspection, and Singleness, without all Biass of Self-views, or Party-interest, Friendship, or Relation: That so Levi's Character, in another Case, may still be applicable to the same Sort of Men. *Neither did he acknowledge his Brethren, nor his own Children:—For they have observed thy Word, and kept thy Covenant,* Deut. xxxiii. 9.—The Apostle's Caution, *lay Hands suddenly on no Man*, 1 Tim. v. 22. is given to the Ministers of every Age, as well as to Timothy; and the Reason added in the Text is weighty, viz. *Neither be Partakers of other Mens Sins, keep thyself pure*: Intimating plainly, that without a due Care be had in this Matter, all their Miscarriages, with the Injuries the Trust may sustain by them, will be charged on the Persons who laid Hands on them. Another Reason of the same Caution was, because there were, in Times, some who desired to be Teachers of the Law, though understanding neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed; and as there were then, so there ever will be such, whom therefore it is both the Interest and the Duty of the Church to keep back: For since their Character and Office is to be Ministers of the Gospel, it is an indispensable Qualification of all such, that they, in some good Measure, understand and have Experience of it.

And the more Need there is of a watchful Care and Circumspection in this Matter, that the Romish Yoke of Patronages

Patronages has of late Years been a-new wreathed about the Neck of this Church; a Grievance which, among many others, alas! we are become but too easy under: An Evil, which, without such an extraordinary Care, in this Business as is scarce to be expected, by itself alone will not fail, in a short Time, to ruin a Church, and do abundant Harm to the Trust.

What natural and gracious Endowments of Mind, what an Acquaintance with, and Understanding of the holy Scriptures, what a Variety of human Learning, what Knowledge of the World and of Men, as well as of Books, what spiritual Wisdom, Prudence and Discerning for dealing with Sinners, the observing of Providence, the Discovery of Satan's Tentations; for suiting the Word unto the Times, and to the various Cases and Conditions of Men, and for speaking a Word in Season to weary Souls; what Knowledge and Fixedness in the Principles of Church Communion, what Fitness for governing and for living socially, what Freedom from, or at least Mastery over Pride, Passion, Self-will and Conceit, Dissimulation, Worldliness, a stiff, haughty or wrathful Temper of Spirit; what Self-denial, Patience, Meekness, Condescension, Wariness in the Case of Offence. Readiness for the Cross, Diligence, Candor, Sincerity, Kindness, Fidelity, Gravity, Courage and Resolution, Zeal for his Master's Glory, and other Qualifications, are necessary to make an able Minister of the New Testament, I will not take upon me to shew, nor would the Enlargement of a particular Head admit of it, I conclude this Point, with a Passage from a Letter of that great Man of God, Mr. John Knox, writ the Year before his Death, to the General Assembly of this Church, then met; "Unfaithful, and Traitors to the Flock, says he, shall ye be, before the Lord Jesus Christ, if, with Consent directly ye suffer unworthy Men to be thrust into the Ministry of the Church, under whatsoever Pretence it shall be."

But,

II. We may view this keeping of the Trust with Reference to the Subject, or the Receptacles where it must be kept. And.

I. They must keep it in their Head, "in their Minds and Memories I mean." For, if either they do not understand it, or if they forget it, how shall they keep it?

No Faculty has received a more sensible Bruise by the Fall, than the Memory has done; yet it is most necessary to the Exercise of Religion: Therefore did the Lord so often and so earnestly inculcate on his People Israel (as he does on us likewise) that they would remember, and beware of forgetting his Works, his Covenant, his Law, his Statutes: Therefore is it promised in the New Covenant, *I will put my Law into their Mind, —and in their Minds will I write them*, Heb. viii. 20. and x. 16. In Pursuance of the same Promise does our Lord assure, not only his Ministers, but all his People, that the Holy Ghost shall be sent of the Father, in his Name, to *teach them all Things*, and to *bring all Things to their Remembrance*, John xiv. 26.

The betraying or vitiating of the Trust, in all Times, we find, began with forgetting of it. *Our Fathers dealt proudly, —and refused to obey, neither were mindful of the Wonders that thou didst among them*—Neh. ix. 17. *Yet my People have forgotten me, Days without Number, —because my People have forgotten me, they have burnt Incense to Vanity, and they have caused them to stumble from the ancient Paths, to walk in Paths in a Way not cast up*, Jer. ii. 32. and xvi. 15. See Jer. xxiii. 27. Ezek. xxii. 12. and xxiii. 35. *Seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy Children. Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built Temples*, Hos. iv. 6. David, being aware of this, was careful never to forget the *Precepts*, the *Law*, the *Commandments*, Psal. cxix. 93, 153, 176. See also 2 Pet. iii. 1, 2. Jude 17.

2. They must keep it in their Hearts. *My Son, forget not my Law, let thine Heart keep my Commandments*, Prov. iii. 1. What is kept in the Heart is well kept, being put as far as may be out of Harm's Way: For though it cannot be absolutely said, that there Thieves cannot break thro' and steal, yet there will neither Devils nor Men come easily at it. Therefore, as David did, so should every Minister, yea, every Believer, hide the Word, hide the whole *Trust in his Heart*, that he may keep it, and not sin against God, Psal. cxix. 11. And, without they keep it there, they will never keep it safe. Their Affections should be settled on it, wrapt and exercised about it; they should desire its Safety and Thriving, delight in it, and rejoice over it, be thoughtful and careful about it, fear lest any Harm befall



befall it, be zealous for it, grieve and mourn when it is wronged, &c.

The not receiving and lodging of the Trust in their Hearts, proves the betraying of it, and the undoing of the Persons both of them, *because they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved. For this Cause God shall send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the Truth,* 2 Thess. ii. 10. — How much Ministers ought to have the Trust and the Concerns of it at Heart, we may learn from David. *The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up. Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, &c. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem. — If I do not remember thee, let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth; If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief Joy,* Psal. lxi. 9. and cxix. 136, 139. and cxxxii. 3, — 5. and cxxxvii. 5 6. From our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Meat and Drink it was to do his Father's Will, in keeping the Trust. From the Apostle Paul: *But none of these Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, —* Acts xx. 24. And throughout his Epistles. This Trust they ought to have more at Heart, and deeper in their Heart, than Ease, Wealth, Reputation, Relations, Liberty, yea, than Life itself.

3. They must keep it in their Lips. For the Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth: For he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, Mal. ii. 7. "If Levi would walk with God in Peace and Equity, and turn many away from Iniquity, *The Law of Truth must be in his Mouth, and Iniquity not to be found in his Lips,* Ver 6. David, having hid the Trust in his Heart, adds, *With my Lips have I declared all the Judgments of thy Mouth: And, I will speak of thy Testimonies also before Kings. and will not be ashamed,* cxix. 13, 46. Since the Mouth of the Righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment, Psal. xxxvii. 30. much more should the Minister's.

They should be so full of it, that it may ever be ready to flow forth of their Lips: Their Lips should both publicly and privately dispense the Trust, by making to be heard as the Silver Trumpets did of Old, the joyful Sound; even

so should their Tongues be as choice Silver, and their Lips feed many, as Prov. x. 20, 21. Their Lips should commend the Trust, and on all proper Occasions confess and avouch it, they should vindicate and defend it, &c."

4. They must keep it in the whole of their Conversation. "In their Life, Walk and Ways ought they to copy out the Trust; to become living, walking Editions of it, and so set it before the Eyes of Men, in its native and amiable Influence, Efficacy and Effects. And thus mainly it is, they are to become the Light of the World, viz. by letting their *Light so shine before Men, that they seeing their good Works, may glorify their Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. v. 14, 16. By this Means are they, as the Sons of God and Servants of Christ, blameless and harmless, *to shine as Lights in the World* (as Stars in Christ's Right-Hand) Rev. ii. 1. amidst a crooked and perverse Nation, holding forth the Word of Life, Phil. ii. 15, 16. It must be the Business of their Life to conform themselves unto the Trust, to mind, watch and attend it: And in one Word to trade and occupy therewith till their Lord come. *For me to like is Christ*, says the Apostle, Acts vi. 4. Phil. i. 21. And as he did, so must they spend and be spent for the Trust.

6. they must keep it in the World. They are to do their utmost, I mean, to convey it into, and keep it in the Heads, Hearts, Lips and Lives of others. They as spiritual Parents, in a Sense, are, by Means of this Trust, to beget and bring forth a Seed, to nourish and bring up a Generation of Sons and Daughters unto the Lord; who may be to him for a People, for a Name and for a Praise; in whom and by whom his Name may be perpetuated from Age to Age, while the Sun endures. *For though you have Ten Thousand Instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many Fathers: For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel*, 1 Cor. iv. 15. *My little Children, of whom I travel in Birth again, until Christ be formed in you*, Gal. iv. 19.

These are they to espouse unto one Husband, that they may present them as a chaste Virgin unto Christ: And having done so, they ought, with the Apostle, to be jealous and watchful over them with a godly Jealousy, *fearing lest as the Serpent beguiled Eve, through his Subtilty, so their Minds* (with Reference to the Doctrine, Institutions,

or holy Commandments) *should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ*, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. *My little Children*, says the Apostle, *I stand in Doubt of you: Tell me, ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law*, Gal. iv. 20. —

Thus are they to keep the Trust, not only in themselves as above, but in others; doing what in them lies to prevent its being falsified or adulterated by any, whether within or without the Church, to save it, (for so the Word in the Text, rendered *keep*, is sometimes translated, as 2 Pet. ii. 5.) from Corruption, Harm, or unkindly Usage of any Sort: For they, as Standard-bearers for Christ, are appointed to bear up the Banner of Truth in the Church, and in the World; without letting it fall in the Streets, while they are to stand by and uphold it, to be the Opposition and Assaults, for Numbers, Power, Wisdom, Learning, ever so formidable to Flesh and Blood: For, be the Case as it will, if they prove but stedfast and valiant, they are sure to overcome by the Blood of the Lamb, and the Word of their Testimony, even though they love not their Lives unto the Death, Rev. xii. 11. Though their Lives should go into the Cause, what then? They themselves shall be no Losers, but Gainers: For says our Lord, — *Whosoever shall lose his Life for my Sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it*, Mark viii. 35. They, even in that Event, go off the Field Victors, as their Lord did before them, who on his Cross triumphed over the World, the Law, Sin, Death and Devils. And Truth shall live and triumph, tho' they ly in the Dust.

6. They must keep it in the holy Scripture, and in other approved Standards of Doctrine, and Forms of sound Words agreeable thereto. Though they are indeed, while without Prejudice to the Trust it may be done, to shun profane and vain Babblings, because often they increase unto more Ungodliness, and their *Word doth eat as Canker*, 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. Yet must they, not only in Meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth, Verse 25. but they should be able by sound Doctrine to convince the Gainsayers, and to stop the Mouths of vain Talkers and Deceivers, Tit. i. 9. — 11. by vindicating the Text of holy Scripture, with the divine Truths therein



therein contained, from their corrupt and false Glosses. They are to pursue the Adversaries, demolish their Refuges of Lies, rescue the Language of the Holy Ghost, violated and carried Captive by them, recover the Trust, and with the Two-edged Sword of the Word, execute Vengeance on every Dagon set up beside the Ark of God.

The Standards of sound Doctrine, by our Fore-fathers with great Skill and Care, and in a Dependence on Heaven, drawn forth of the Holy Scripture, in Contradiction to the spurious Doctrines of Men, falsely fathered on the World; these, I say, are they also to keep pure and clear, that no dead Flie get in there, to make the Ointment send forth a bad Savour: These must they see to, that they be not bended or wrested, that they be not blended, undermined or abandoned. For that new Piece of Liberty so much contended for of late, I mean the Disclaiming of all Confessions and Standards of Doctrine, besides the holy Scripture, as human Imposition, is certainly, whatever Colours Men may put on it, yea, cannot fail to be, as is evidently proved, destructive to the Trust. For who that bear the Name of Christian, but they will subscribe to the Words of Scripture? Papists, Socinians, Arminians, Spinofists and Arians will do so; each of them, mean while, taking the Words, and so judging with both God and the World, in a Sense agreeable to their own corrupt Sentiments, though contrary to the common Sense and Understanding of Men, contrary to the Phrasology of Scripture, the Analogy of Faith, and of the Context: Thus would Hymeneus and Philetus have subscribed the Scripture Words anent the Resurrection, meaning at the same Time it was past already. Alas! what should become of the Trust, and how should it be kept, at this Rate? But there is a

III. View "of this keeping of the Trust, with Reference, namely to its Contraries. And."

1. They are to keep it, in Opposition to losing, or letting of it slip unknown to them. *Look to yourselves, that we lose not these Things, &c.* 2 John 8. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest Heed to the Things, which we have heard, lest at any Time we should let them slip,* Heb. ii. 1. (or run out as leaking Vessels, as the Word imports) "Of this, Ministers, as well as others, are in Hazard,"

2<sup>rd</sup>," through Sloth, Negligence and Carelessness about it, "or through a mistaken Confidence of its Safety and Security. It is to prevent losing or letting it slip, that we are directed by the Holy Ghost, to bind the Trust upon our Fingers, and about our Neck, and to write it on the Table of our Heart, Prov. iii. 3. and vii. 2.

They are to keep it in Opposition to the Fraudulence, Deceit and "Subtilty of Men, that they be not beguiled or over-reached by them." Many Times People have been tricked out of the Trust: For Seducers and Corrupters of the Faith have their Slight and cunning Craftiness, whereby, like unfair Gamesters, they ly in wait to deceive the Simple and Heedless, Eph. iv. 14 wherefore Ministers need to be full of Eyes, even to this Purpose, that they may watch and look about them. "It is a known Story how the Arians tricked the Orthodox, at the Council of Arminium."

3. They are to keep it in Opposition to main Force, Violence and Robbery. "There is a Force of false Authority, a Force of false Learning, or Science falsely so called, a Force of Persecution, &c. all which they are to keep the Trust against. The Devil and the World will sometimes assault them, as a Robber does a Man on the High-way for his Money, with Axes and Halters, Fire and Faggot, putting it to the Trust, or else to quit the World, to yield either the Trust or their Life without Delay. Daniel, and the three Children were presently at a Point what to do in this Case: Nor had they of whom *the World was not worthy*, the least Hesitation about it; *they were tortured, not accepting Deliverance.*—*They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the Sword,*—Heb. xi. 35.—38. Why? they were settled and clear in this Point, that the Trust was never, on no Account, to be parted with."

4. They are to keep it in Opposition to a voluntary Surrender or Sale of it. *Buy the Truth, and sell it not*, Pro. xxiii. 23. buy it at any Rate, and sell it at no Rate. What though it cost us all our Substance, all our Credit, all our Ease, our Liberty, yea, our Life? "Why? we have made a good Purchase, and have no Reason to grudge the Price: Therefore" sell it not again. have Offer what you will. Sell it not for Gold; one Grain of Gospel-truth is worth  
more

more than all that Devils and Men can offer for it, though they should be as good as their Word. All these Things will I give thee, was Satan's utmost bode to our Lord. "Galiacus, Marquis of Vico, when tempted with great Sums of Gold to return back to the Church of Rome, answered like a wise Merchant, *Let their Money perish with them, who esteem all the Gold in the World with one Days Communion with Jesus Christ; and his holy Spirit; accursed be that Religion for ever, that would wed Men to the World, and divorce them from God; go home and lock up your Dross in your Hearts, for my Lord has bestowed on me more precious Jewels, and durable Riches.* It was an honourable Reflection, one of the great Men of that Church past upon Luther, *That German Beast cares not for Gold.* When Ministers, for the Sake of Money, Honour, Preferment, &c. part with the Trust, or any of its Concerns, they in Effect make but Judas's Market; for it is only in his Interests that Christ can now be bought or sold. But the Holy Ghost's Advice is, Keep it and sell it not; for you can never have its Worth:" Sell it not for Ease, Credit, Liberty, Life; yea, sell not Truth for Truth itself.

5. They are to keep it, in Opposition to contemptuous rejecting and throwing it away. Simon Magus, Julian the Apostate, Hymeneus and Philetus, &c. and there have not been wanting Ministers too, who, having first put away a good Conscience, have made Shipwreck after this Sort concerning the Faith. Never was more open Contempt thrown upon Gospel-truth than at this Day; Scepticism and Atheism advance apace, and threaten to swallow up the Trust; The more Need have Ministers to cleave unto it, and hold it fast. Many, they talk and dispute of the most important Points of the Trust with Irreverence and the greatest Indifferency, whether they be true or false; weighing the most sacred and profound Mysteries of the Gospel in the defiled and unequal Scales of their depraved Reason and bold Discourse: And no wonder, in this Case, the Bias appears ay to the wrong Side of the Question. Others having admitted the Truth in Notion and Speculation to sojourn with them, but finding it an officious Spy upon their Lusts, and that it would be also a Judge having Power and Authority in the Soul, they become weary



weary of it, and not liking to retain it any longer in their Knowledge, Rom. i. 28. Counsel is taken how to expel and cast it forth. To which End, the old Man rouses and musters his whole Force against it, under the leading of natural Enmity; that so People, being rid of this troublesome Guest, may be at perfect Freedom to walk, without any Controul, after and under the Conduct of their Corrupt Lusts and Affections; on which they found it, to be a Curb and an uneasy Restraint.

For, while the Things themselves, in their own spiritual Nature and Glory, are never discerned, nor the transforming Power and Efficacy of Gospel-truth experienced, let one's doctrinal Knowledge of it be what it will, Corruption will, on certain Occasions, thro' the Depravation of the Mind and Affections, easily prevail against Conviction: And Truth being first stifled as to its Operation, it will not be found any hard Matter to reject it as to the Profession: Mean while, such Notions of divine Things, as are more suited unto the Vanity of our Minds, and to the Carnality of our Affections, will be readily received, and kindly entertained. Pride and Vanity of Mind (by means of which Man affects to be his own Guide and Rule, and an absolute Judge in divine Things; without captivating his own Reason and Imagination to infinite Wisdom, without yielding up Soul and Conscience, and every Thought, to the Obedience of Christ) scorn and despise; and no wonder they then renounce the Trust in such Instances as are above the Comprehension of Reason, as it is finite, or contrary to it, as it is depraved. This, no doubt of it, is one of the main Springs of that dismal and numerous Apostacy on Foot at this Day in these Lands: And O that it could be concealed in Gath, and kept from being published in the Streets of Ashkelon, that so many, who go by the Name of Keepers of the Trust, are to be found as He-goats on the Head of that Flock: But the Scripture must be fulfilled, and cannot be broken: Wisdom however will be justified of her Children; let Satan winnow as hard as he can, he shall never carry one of Christ's little Flock. Our Lord will never be worse than his Word; *The Meek will he guide in Judgment, and the Meek will he teach his Way*, Psal. xxv. 9. They shall be kept by the Power of God, through faith unto

Salvation; and none shall be able to pluck them out of his Hand. It was likewise proposed under this Head to speak, in a few Words, of"

The Manner how this Trust is to be kept; which may easily be gatherd from what has been said. As,

" They are to keep it with Care and Diligence. They must not be slothful in this Business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord; for there is a Curse laid up for them who do the Work of the Lord negligently. This being an Affair of the greatest Importance, on their Management of which, the Glory of God, the Salvation of immortal Souls, the Honour of the Redeemer, and the good of the Redeemed, do in a great Measure depend, they must gladly spend and be spent about it. The Value and Excellency of the Thing, the End and Design of it, their Lord's Will and Command, the Diligence of the Enemies of Souls, the Uncertainty of the Season of their Attendance, the glorious Reward, are all of them strong Arguments for this Diligence. It were not amiss, therefore, that Thoughts of this Sort were often going through their Mind; Can I do no more for God? Can I do no more for Christ? Can I do no more for Souls? Can I do no more, who have done so little, and who can never do too much, and who, for ought I know, may be doing my last? With all Keeping therefore are they to keep it.

They must keep it punctually, critically, and with the utmost Exactness: Without regarding a carnal World's Sentiments of them in this Matter, who will be sure, if they say no worse, to call it Humour, Biggotry, Stiffness: Because they do not believe, nor will they consider it as a Trust from the Lord Jesus Christ, and that his Instructions are the alone Rule of keeping it; and that therefore Men are not at Liberty, as in their own Affairs, to cut and carve in what concerns it. With us therefore ought it to be a very small thing to be judged of Man's Day, 1 Cor. iv. 3. who readily judgeth of Things before the Time: They will be no Auditors of our Accounts concerning the Trust, and the keeping of it; for he that judgeth us is the Lord. Therefore as Moses did, so must we in all things narrowly observe the Pattern shewed in the Mount. They must keep it sound, whole and intire; They must keep it pure and distinct, as was said above on the Head,  
of

the Truth itself: They must keep it only, in Comparison: It must be the Business of their Life; *Meditate on these Things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy Profiting may appear to all*, 1 Tim. iv. 15. Without they do so, they can never make that full Proof of their Ministry required, 2 Tim. iv. 5. It is true, they are to keep Acts of Assembly, Acts of Parliament, and other things too; and good Reason, so far as they are subservient unto, or consistent with keeping of the Trust: But still the keeping of it must be their first and their chief Concern; in respect of which all other things are, by them, to be held for mere trifles and Matters of Moon-shine.

They are to keep it with Wisdom and Prudence: For the Eyes of many will be on them, the Hearts, Tongues, and Hands of many will be against them; much Need therefore have they to be wise as Serpents, to walk circumspectly and in Wisdom towards them that are without, especially, that the Trust, that the Way of God be not evil spoken of: And to take Care withal, their Wisdom do not degenerate into Craft and carnal Policy; that the Wisdom of the Man do not inroach upon the Candor and Integrity of the Christian; which will be most unbeseeming the Dignity of their Office, Priest-craft being a Thing every Body lothes and detests: And the Trust does not need Art, or Cunning to the keeping of it, nor are they ever blest to that Purpose; yea, so far from it, no one Thing has the Trust sustained more Harm by, than by fleshly Wisdom and carnal Prudence. But further, if they would duly keep the Trust, they are in Point of spiritual Wisdom to avoid all Things, Places, Companies that will insnare, expose or give Scandal, whether to the Judicious, to the Wicked, or to the Weak: They must keep at the greatest Distance from every Thing that is defiling, yea, and abstain from all Appearance of Evil; for many things are lawful, that are far from being expedient. They, of all Persons, are most concerned and obliged to walk in all Prudence of this Sort; for the Honour and Safety of the Trust, their own Usefulness, Credit and Comfort, and the Welfare of others, are all of them much at a Stake in the Case.

They are to keep it without Partiality, or Respect of Persons, As God does not, so neither must they in his



Matters, respect the Persons of Men, James ii. 9. In admitting to Privileges, in dispensing of Discipline, they are not to regard the Rich, more than the Poor: But the King, if he violates the Trust in any Instance, if he declines from the Faith or Holiness of the Gospel, he is to be withstood and rebuked as well as the Beggar, 2 Chron. xxvi. 18. 2 Sam. xii. 7. There is an official Honour, but no Indulgence, due to the one, more than to the other. They are to keep the Trust *willingly and cheerfully*. — *taking the Oversight thereof, not by Constraint,\* but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind*, 1 Pet. v. 2. Their Work must not be an irksome Task, but their Choice and their Delight, their Meat and their Drink. They should do all, and endure all, pass through Honour and Dishonour, evil Report and good Report, not only patiently, but cheerfully and with good Will, since it is for a good Lord, who took Delight to do and endure his Father's Will for us. We are not only to rejoice and do good, but to rejoice and endure Trial; the Apostles gloried in Tribulation, and rejoiced, that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for his Name.

They are to keep it with a single Eye, they ought to look not at worldly Gain, worldly Ease and Accommodation, worldly Esteem and Reputation, which are sometimes to be had in keeping the Trust, but at the Glory of God, and of their Saviour, — *not for filthy Lucre*, — 1 Pet. v. 2. Not at the pleasing of Men, but at the Approbation of God: For if they seek not to edify, and save, rather than to please Men, they are not the Servants of Christ \*. Whatsoever we do, especially in this Matter, we must do all to the Glory of God: Nor must our own Happiness, or the eternal Reward itself, be our chief and last End (a new Piece of Science falsely so called, set forth among us, and therefore to be avoided) — else do we dethrone God, to advance Self: For since he is the first Cause, it is no less his Prerogative to be the last End of all Things †. It is well, when Ministers can say with the Apostle, *We preach not Ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and Ourselves your Servants, for Jesus Sake*, 2 Cor. iv. 5. — *For I seek not yours, but you*, Ezek. iii. 8, 9.

The

\* Rem. ii. †

The Trust is to be kept with Zeal and Resolution. The Keepers of this Trust need to have a Brow, as we say, for a Bargain, that so the Opposition and Difficulties, they are sure to meet with, may not damp and cool, but rouse their Courage, animate and warm their Spirits with a new Fervour: Accordingly the Lord tells Ezekiel, *Behold, I have made thy Face strong against their Faces, and thy Fore-head strong against their Fore-heads. As an Adamant, harder than Flint, have I made thy Fore-head: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their Looks*—Ezek. iii. 8, 9. And Jeremiah, *Gird up thy Loins*—*be not dismayed at their Faces, lest*—Jer. i. 17. *for behold I have made thee a defenced City, an Iron Pillar, and brasen Walls against,*—*and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail*—They must not be frightened with big Looks, nor big Words: For by fearing Mens Faces, one is in Hazard of betraying the Trust, and of murdering their Souls, both of them; so great a Snare is the Fear of Man. It will require Courage to stand by, defend, and contend for the Trust, to witness faithfully against Sin, to encounter the stubborn Lusts of rebellious Sinners of the House of Israel, and to speak unto them all, the Words God has commanded whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Ministers ought to be, not only shining Lights, in respect of their Life, and of their Doctrine, as has been hinted before: But *burning Lights*, John v. 35. Burning with fervent Love to God to Souls, burning with ardent Zeal for the Glory of God, the House of God, and all his Interests in the World. The two Witnesses, Rev. xi. 5. *had Fire coming out of their Mouths*. And indeed our Warmth (for none wants it) is best spent in God's Cause and Service: For however beautiful Moderation in our own Matters, and Charity towards them who are otherwise minded from us in lesser Matters, be Moderation in the Matters of God, whatever Reputation it be come to, will be found near of Kin to Lukewarmness and Indifferency. That one may be zealous after a godly Sort, Wisdom, I own, and Self-denial, are both of them necessary; Wisdom, to put it under the Guidance of Knowledge, without allowing it to go before (for as Knowledge without Zeal, is an Eye without a Foot, so Zeal without Knowledge, is like a Foot without an Eye) to proportion it

it to the Cause and Occasion, to bound its Motions and Expressions: lest it degenerate into Uncharitableness, Bitterness, carnal Wrath. Self-denial is also necessary; for, without it, one will never be able to undergo the Contempt, Reproach, and sometimes Persecution from the World, that it is generally thought worthy of: For at best one must be content to go for a Fool, or one distempered and beside himself, Mark iii. 21. Acts xxvi. 24. 2 Cor. v. 13. and to be therefore wondered at, Zech. iii. 8. made a Gazing-stock, Heb. x. 33. 1 Cor. iv. 13. Things that to Nature will never be of easy Digestion. But it is a sufficient Encouragement, in such a Case, that the Spirit of God has told us, we are then fairly on the Road, to be wise indeed,——*If any Man among you seemeth to be wise in the World, let him become a Fool, that he may be wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18.

The Trust is to be kept stedfastly. In this Matter they must be stedfast and immoveable, without ceding or wavering. *That which you have already, hold fast till I come*, Rev. ii. 25. Rev. iii. 2,——11. *Hold fast the Form of sound Words*,——2 Tim, i. 13. the more violently the Enemies of the Trust pull at it, to have it from us, the more earnestly must we cleave to it, and hold by it; like that Soldier, who, after he had lost one of his Hands, wherewith he was holding the Ship, still held with the other, and having lost that too, he took hold of it with his Teeth. Again, it must be kept constantly,——*Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, Rev. ii. 10. Constantly without Intermission, constantly without Defection, or giving it quite over: They who look back, or draw back, are unmeet for this charge; and God says of such, *My Soul shall have no Pleasure in them*, Heb. x. 38. The Priests under the Law had a Dismission at a certain Age, but Death is our Term-Day: And he only, who endures to the End, shall be saved.

And to shut-up all, it must be kept believingly, and dependently. That is, there must be a confident, though humble, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, and believing of the Promises, for being furnished with all Gifts and Graces whatsoever, to qualify and enable for this great Work. He is our Head of Influences, the Fountain of our Strength, all our Well-springs are in him; and Faith is the only Mean



Mean of Conveyance and Communication from him to us, through the Promises: By Faith therefore, with Joy, are we to draw Water out of these Wells of Salvation."

I come now to the Second general Head, which was proposed, namely, the

CONFIRMATION of the Doctrine, viz. That our Lord

Jesus Christ is very earnest and importunate with every one of his Ministers, that, &c. Here we shall show, 1. That it is so. 2. Give some Account why it is so. And both briefly. And,

*First*, That our Lord is thus earnest and importunate, will be evident, if we consider, how,

1. "He not only charges it with them, by Way of Authority, but recommends it to them in the Way of Love and Endearment. He speaks them in such a warm, kind and friendly Manner, as if one was asking another to do him some great Favour or Kindness, to which he had no Obligation: For a Proof of which, we need go no further than the Text. *O Timothy, keep what is committed to thy Trust, and Verse 11. But thou, O Man of God, see these Things*—

2. To the same End, he accosts and plies them with all Sorts of Motives and Arguments, proper to work on reasonable Creatures. As to instance, the Dignity and Excellency of the Trust; *That good Thing committed unto thee keep, 2 Tim. i. 14.* The vast Consequence of their Behaviour in this Matter,—*For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee, 2 Tim. iv. 16.* How many great and precious Promises does he make them, with Reference to the Time of their Warfare and Attendance? Take for one Instance, *Zech. iii. 6, 7. and the Angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus says the Lord of Hosts, if thou walk in my Ways, and if thou wilt keep my Charge, then thou shalt also judge my House, and shalt also keep my Courts, and I will give thee Places, to walk among these that stand by.* And then what unparalleled After-Rewards and Punishments, has he prepared and ascertained, to the faithful and unfaithful Keepers of the Trust, *Mat. xxv. 14,—30. Luke xii. 42.—46. 2 Pet. v. 4. Rev. xix. 20.*

3. With a great deal of Feeling, and affectionate Concern, he forewarns them of all Pieces of bad and hard Usage, iniquitous,

qitous, cruel and unkind Treatment, they are to meet with from the World, and all Sorts of Persons in it, on the Account of their Faithfulness in this Matter; wisely, liberally and kindly, at the same Time, providing for their Support and Comfort, in all such Events, Mat. x. 16, — 42. Luke xii. 11. Mat. xxviii. 20. John xiv. 26. and xv. 18. — 21. and xvi. 1, 2. and xvii. 11. — 18. Rev. ii. 9, 10.

4. He sets before them, for their Warning, for their Imitation and Encouragement, the Examples and Characters of both the Unfaithful and the Faithful Servants of this Sort. Brightly and movingly does he blazon the Characters of the one: How are the Names and Memories of Moses, Phineas, Samuel, Elijah, David, and all the Prophets; of John the Baptist, Paul and the other Apostles, embalmed to all Generations? How amiable and honourable are the Accounts of their Fidelity and Accuracy in keeping of the Trust? Yea, how savory and fragrant are the Memories of faithful Ministers in every Age of the Church? But in what black and frightful Colours are the others drawn! How vile, base, and contemptible does he make them! He, who never mistook so far as to miscall either Person or Thing, can afford them no better Names than *blind Watchmen, blind Guides, idol Shepherds, Hirelings, Thieves, Robbers, Dogs dumb and sleeping; Foxes, Serpents, Vipers Ministers of Satan*, See Isa. lvi. Jer. xxiii. Ezek. xiii. 34. Zech. xi. John x. 2 Cor. xi. Phil. iii. Mat. xxiii. What a Heap of Woes does he pour forth on such, in that one Chapter last cited.

5. We have him narrowly and kindly noticing, commending and cherishing every honest, though weak, Endeavour of this Kind, in any of his servants. *I know—and how thou canst not bear them that are Evil; and thou hast tried them who say they are Apostles—and thou holdest fast my Name, hast not denied my Faith*, Rev. ii. 2, 13. *I know—for thou hast a little Strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name.—Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, I also will keep thee, &c.* Rev. iii. 4, 8, 10.

6. He is much and frequent on this Subject of Ministers keeping the Trust faithfully; and that both in the Old and in the New Testament.

*Secondly.*

*Secondly*, Why is our Lord so very much concerned about this Business of the Trust? Why so much dealing with Ministers on this Head?

1. Because his Father's and his own Glory is so much displayed in it. A People without the Gospel, be their other Knowledge what it will, Darkneſs, even groſs Darkneſs covers them: But whenever they are viſited with it, the Glory of the Lord riſes upon them, Iſa. lx. 2, 3. See Ver. 19. 20. For the Light of the glorious Gospel of Chriſt is the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt, 2 Cor. iv. 4 6. The Gospel is the Glaſs, wherein we with open Face, behold his, as well as the Father's Glory, and are changed, &c. 2 Cor. iii 18. So that, mar the Trust, and the Glory of God the Father and of Chriſt is, in the moſt radiant Diſcovery of it, accordingly marred.

2. As the Trust itſelf is of ineſtimable Value, ſo it coſt him very dear. He bought it, or rather he, as our Goel to whom the Right of Redemption belonged redeemed it for us, at a great Price: As the Church herſelf, ſo her Proviſion, the Truths and Inſtitutions, of the Gospel, with which, and by Means of which ſhe muſt be fed and nourished, are all of them the Purchase of his Blood,—*to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood*, Acts xx. 28. Now, he having entrusted his Servants with his Goods, his unſearchable Riches, a Stock that, however cheap it may be in our Eyes, he knows ſo well how it waſcome by, is it any Wonder he be concerned, that it be not imbezzelled or miſimproved, but managed, to the beſt Advantage?

3. The keeping of it, in the Senſe of the Text, is *of the laſt Importance to their own, and to the Souls of other Men*. Now, his Love and Good-will to Souls, known to paſs Knowledge and Comprehension, could not fail to ſhow itſelf in an earneſt Concern, for preventing of what would prove ſo; not only dangerous, but, ruinous and deſtructive to them, as he ſaw the corrupting or miſguiding of the Trust behaved to be.

4. Because he has laid the Weight and Streſs of its Safety and Preſervation in the World, on their keeping, as the great Mean ordained, and to be bleſt to that Effect. The keeping of the Trust, it is true, as it is every one's



Interest, is likewise their Duty: But in Regard what is every Body's Work, proves commonly no Body's Care; therefore calls he to them, out from among the rest of Mankind, set them apart to this very Thing, and appoints them, for their Task and Business in the World, the keeping of it, as has been said. So, if it shall be lost or vitiate, he knows at whose Door the Blame will ly, and who must answer for it. What Wonder then, when such a weighty Trust is lodged with them, when so much Confidence is put in them, and when so much depends on their Conduct, that he be very concerned, they may prove true and honest?

5. He knows the Difficulties will attend the Task, better by much than they do, therefore, to prepare and to fortify them against these, that they may not make undue Impressions when they occur, is he at so much Pains to have them firm and hearty once in the Affair. And particularly, he knew with what earnest Solicitations they would be plied from the other Side; he foresaw what Effays would be made to corrupt them by Bribes and Flatteries, and to fright them with Pain, Shame and Loss; how Flesh and Blood would be speaking them aside; how Satan, the World, and carnal Friends, never one of all whom have a good Advice to give in this Affair, would be still buzzing about them, not to be stiff or precise, but easy in such Matters, as they would not have a Hand in their own Undoing: Therefore to secure them in their own true Interest, as well as in their Duty, does he make the first Application.

6. Because he saw the Trust was to be in Hazard chiefly from them. This, since it has been so manifest to the melancholy Observation and Experience of every Age of the Church, needs scarce any Thing to be said for clearing of it. Under the Old Testament, the Priests and Prophets led the People first into Superstition and Idolatry, Jer. xxiii. 15. which issued in the Babylonish Captivity: And afterwards, the People being effectually cured of Idolatry, the same Persons, through their Ignorance, and evil Example, turned them off from God and his Law, and forced the Body of the Nation into a Rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ; which compleated their Apostacy, and ended in the total Destruction of that Church and People: And what Defection or Apostacy, in any Church since that Time, but its first Rise

Rise was from the Ministry? The first Occasion thereof, in all Ages, has been given by, or taken from the Keepers of the Trust; their corrupting of the Doctrine, the Worship, or the Government; their Scandals, Divisions, Ignorance, Negligence, Ambition, Wordly-mindedness, &c. What Error or Heresy has ever the Church been troubled with, but Church-men were either Parents or Nurses to it? And when they become troubled Fountains, and pollute the Waters of the Sanctuary, how shall they heal the Nations any longer?

Lastly, The Trust once corrupted or violate by them, he knew, would be neither soon nor easily recovered to its primitive Condition again. Whatever Way they may at first fall or be led into Errors or Corruptions of this Sort, yet, having once admitted them, there will not be wanting a concurring Abundance of Things to rivet them so strongly, as no Evidence of Truth, nor Proposal of Danger can prevail with them to renounce and relinquish the same. Among many other, the Jews and Papists are amazing Instances of the Truth of this: For the former continue obstinate in their most irrational Unbelief; and the latter (though otherwise, wise and learned, many of them) in their Errors, Impieties, Superstitions and Idolatries; Both of them Proof against the clearest Light and the strongest Evidence of Scripture and Reason, and all this for many Generations successively. Corruption being large, stronger, and more prevalent in the Will, the Affections, and the practical Understanding, than in the directive Powers of the Soul, Men, without they be under the Power of divine Grace, will, on several Occasions, not like to retain the Truth any longer in their Knowledge; yea, they will rebel against the Light, that before they had given peaceable Lodging unto. And when Error comes once to be received under the Covert and Colour of Truth, it will not only claim all the Rights and Privileges of Truth, as its Due, but it will take firmer Root in the carnal Mind by much, than Truth itself either doth or can do in such a Soil: Because all Error, having somewhat to recommend it to the Flesh and to the Lusts thereof, is suited in one Respect or other to the corrupt Mind; whereas Gospel Truth the Mind disrelishest, by reason of its inbred and uncured Enmity to the Things it proposes. Hence it is found easier

by far, to draw many, who want Experience of Truth's Power and Efficacy in their Souls, off from the Profession of it, than to recover one from his erroneous Way, especially if he be confirmed therein by Credit, Society, Interest or other Prejudices. Now, Ministers being generally of all others, the most capable to maintain the Cause of Error; Interest, Prejudice and various Lusts, if they happen once to espouse it, will engage them to improve their Talents, to the utmost, that Way. And further, the committing of it to others, being a Part of their Office, they will readily take Care not to intrust any but such as are of the same Sentiments anent it with themselves; Of which Sort enough will ever be found ready at Hand, who by their Zeal for the favourite Principles, and for the fashionable Courses of the Day, or by their being, as Paul was, *more exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of their Fathers*, Gal. i. 14. will seek to recommend themselves to the good Graces of such as are in a Condition to forward their Promotion to the pretended keeping, but real corrupting of the Trust, by which Means, instead of Redress, suffers more Violence and Invasions still; Error and Corruption are conveyed down by Succession, come to be the chief Care of the Keepers, and at length plead Prescription. All which are exemplified in every corrupt Church, and have been in this, in the Days of abjured Prelacy especially. From all which, we may be fully satisfied, our Lord has abundance and good Reasons for his being earnest and importunate with every one of his Ministers, faithfully to keep the Trust he has committed to them.

#### A P P L I C A T I O N.

**H**ence we may learn, how happy it had been for the New Testament Church, if Christians, and especially Ministers, as they ought to have done, had minded this Charge; if they had faithfully kept the divine Trust, as it was put into their Custody by our Lord Jesus Christ in the holy Scripture: A heavenly Treasure, richly furnished with whatever was necessary to promote Faith and Holiness, and providing abundantly for our Consolation in this World, and for our complete Happiness in that which is to come: Hereby had the Glory of God and our Saviour, the Credit of the Gospel, the Safety of Souls, the Peace of the

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the Church, and the Honour of the Ministry, being effectually consulted. But ah! the Pride and Vanity of the fleshly Mind would not be restrained: Men soon become too wise, to walk by their Lord's Instructions in this Matter; in place of the heavenly Doctrine, another, begot by the Father of Lies on the Wisdom of the Flesh, is fathered Christ, and palmed on the World; the Institutions must be new moulded, and Gaps made in the Hedge of the holy Commandments: Hence, all Manner of Ruins in the Church, Superstition, Idolatry, damnable Heresy, Error, Profaneness, Offences, Schisms, scandalous Divisions, Contempt of the Ministry, &c. And, *wo to the World, because of these Things.*

Again, since it is so, as in the Doctrine; then sure, our Lord Jesus Christ will hold himself very little obliged to unfaithful Ministers; whom neither his Love nor his Authority, whom neither Affection, Conscience, Honour nor Gratitude can win, whom no Ties can secure in his Interests. He trusts them, honours them, beseeches them as Friends, encourages them with all Sorts of Promises, yet can they not be prevailed upon, nor engaged to deal truly and honestly by him. It is true, he, for holy and wise Ends, intrusts many one, whom, if they knew them as well as he does, no Body else would trust: But he likes to try Folks Kindness, and to let it be known. What return will they be able to make to such cutting Queries as these, Is this your Kindness to your Friend? Do ye thus requite your Lord, O Foolish and Unwise?

Further, the Doctrine accounts for these zealous Appearances, and stedfast Contendings, about the seemingly small Concern of the Trust, for which the World has, in every Age, frankly condemned faithful Ministers, and cried Shame upon them. Why? they knew their Lord was earnest and importunate with them, to keep the Trust faithfully; Hence their Business, in these Matters, was not to please Men (in which Case they had not been the Servants of Christ, Gal. i. 10.) but to please him who had called them to be Soldiers, 2 Tim. ii. 4. provided they might finish their Course with Joy, and fulfil the Ministry they had received of their Lord, with his Testimony and Approbation, they valued little Mens good or ill Words, or their dear-bought good Deeds.

Again,

Again, since the holy Ministry is a keeping of the Trust, committed by Christ to every Minister in particular, as the Doctrine imports, then Diocesan Bishops are none of the Keepers appointed by Christ. For the Pastoral Office being a personal Trust, to be discharged by every one in his own Person (that is, he must in his own Person oversee the Flock, and dispense the Trust to them all, by preaching the Word, baptizing, administering the Lord's Supper, admonishing publicly and privately, blessing the Congregation, &c.) he who, claiming Episcopal Authority over Fifty, One Hundred, or Two Hundred particular Churches, pretends to keep the Trust, and discharge his Office among them by others, namely, his Curates and Substitutes, though he may be an Idol Shepherd, or a Lord over God's Heritage, can be none of Christ's Ministers: For where can he shew his commission from Christ, the sole Head of the Church, and Prince of Pastors, for delegating that to others, which is by Christ committed to his own personal keeping? The Lawyer's Maxim, *Delegatum non potest delegari*, is applicable to this, as well as to other Cases. They would not, I think, wish to receive the Shepherd's rewards, or go to Heaven by Proxy too.

The most favourable and tolerable Account can be given of this Matter, is, That the Bishop is none of Christ's, but as the King's Minister, *circa sacra*: For, though the Object of the Office be Things Ecclesiastical, the Spring and Source of it is Civil, (according to the ancient Constitution of the Government of the Church of England, I mean, as evident from the necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man, a Book composed by several Bishops, and other great Doctors. and approved by Authority, in the Days of Henry, VIII. Otherwise the Spring of it is Antichristian) as flowing from the civil Magistrate: So that he would be, after a Sort, and Officer of the King, about the Matters of the Lord, but that his Office exceeds all the Powers that can belong to one in such a Capacity; whereas Gospel Ministers are Christ's Officers, not the King's. But the Bishop's Office, it is certain, whoever be the Maker, is of an human make; it has its Being, not from Christ, but with us from the King, on whom its sole Dependence is, both as to Being, Preservation and Operation; However, they give out, and would fain have the World to believe

believe otherwise. The King, Lords and Commons, tho' they cannot alter any divine Law or Office, that receives its Being from the Institution of Christ, yet can they, as they see Cause, not only make what Alteration they please in this Government; but they can pull it down by the Wholesale, and give Place to another: And, who can so say ought against their having the Disposal of their own Creature? May that Time be hastened, when God will put it into their Hearts, to deal by that unheavenly Plant, as it deserves, and make them to call to Mind their Covenant Obligations to this Purpose: For, however I honour the Memory of several worthy Men, who have suffered that Office to be put upon them, the Trust, as it never has, so neither will it ever be safe under the Shadow of it. Antichrist's Hierarchy cannot ever be so purged or rectified, as, that it may be allowed to enter the Congregation of the Lord, or expected to be blest there.

Conformable to what is said above, of the Diocesan's Office being a humane Creature, and of the civil Government's Power to dispose of it, is the Prelates Practice, at least, if not their Principle, in submitting to civil Deposition: Whereas, it is notour, when the Office is of divine Institution, the Officers Authority may remain good, tho' the Powers of the World should oppose themselves to it; for a civil Prohibition can never make void a Commission received from Jesus Christ, Acts iv. 19. and v. 29. I will not degress further, to consider their Clatter of Timothy, his being a Bishop of the Diocesan make: Anent which any, who please, may consult Prynne on the Head, and be satisfied.

The Doctrine might also be improven for Conviction and Reproof of such, who undertake the Trust, but thro' the Prevalence of one corrupt Lust or other, neglect the keeping of it; of such, who are engaged and employed more in keeping other Things, than in keeping the Trust; of such, who neither do themselves, nor suffer others to keep it, after the best Sort they can. That in every Age there have been such People in the Church, neither Scripture, nor latter History will allow us to doubt: Such an one was Amaziah Priest of Bethel, Amos vii. 10. who neither made Conscience of keeping it himself, nor would he allow Amos to keep the Trust of the Lord; but first accused him



to the Government, and, that not taking Effect according to his Wish, in the next Place plied him with artful Insinuations; since he could not get him out of the World, to get him out of that Country-side, where the honest Man's Commission bore him to keep the Trust: For which sly Methods of his, he got a more plain than pleasant Return from the Prophet, Ver. 16, 17. Of the same Stamp was that Company of Clergymen, Jer. xxv. 8. who had certainly put Jeremiah to Death, for delivering a Message of the Lord to them, had not the Princes come and rescued him from them, Ver. 10, 16. See also Jer. xxviii. 1 — 17. and xxix. 20, — 24. — 32. And were not the Church-Men among the Jews in our Lord's, and his Apostles Days, all of them generally of this Kidney? Of such, who instead of keeping, plainly and avowedly betray the Trust: Of which Judases this Church, in her several Periods, has not wanted her large Share. The Names and Memories of Adamson, Gladstones, Spotswood, Fairfoul, Sharp, &c. will rot and stink to all Generations: — Of such, who, though they keep the Trust in several Respects, yet do it not after the due Manner. And in one Word, may not this Doctrine reach deep Convictions to all of us, who have been honoured to be put in the Trust with the Gospel? For who is sufficient for these Things? Who among us all dare say we have kept the Trust, according to our Lord's Instructions? Happy they who can say, *I have declared the whole Counsel of God! I am free from the Blood of all Men.* The Evidences, the Evil, with the Springs and Causes of these, might, under this Head also, be laid open, if one was to enlarge on it.

This Doctrine might likewise give Occasion, to not only a Search and Trial, as to personal Faithfulness in keeping of the Trust, but also to a more and extended Inquiry, a Search into public and national Faithfulness in this Matter, I mean. But such an Inquiry would much better become the Church herself, than any particular Member, especially so inconsiderable an one. It would well become the Church herself, I say, to enquire into the Behaviour of all Ranks of Persons, from the Throne downward, in this Matter, since their last solemn Engagement, by Covenant, to keep the Trust, as becomes a redeemed Church and Nation, even unto this Day; and seriously and humbly, yet  
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freely and holdly, as Samuel did with Israel. *to reason with them before the Lord, of all the righteous Acts of the Lord, which he did to them and to their Fathers, 1 Sam. xii. 7. — and of all their Unstedfastnesses and treacherous dealings* (according as they should be found) with the Lord, and in Reference to his Trust and his Covenant; and all this in Order to their Return to the Lord; that so the Fierceness of his Wrath might be turned away; that so we might no more be termed *forsaken*, but be a *Crown of Glory* in the Hand of the Lord, and a *royal Diadem* in the Hand of our God; and our God might yet rejoice over us, as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, *Isa. lxii. 3, — 5.* But I proceed to the Use of "

EXHORTATION. Since it is so, "as the Doctrine bears," may I not hope, my reverend Brethren and Fathers will bear with me, to put them in Mind of the Holy Ghost's Exhortation to them, concerning this great and important Affair committed to their Trust? Hear then, and receive not mine, but his Exhortation, both in the Way of Endearment, and in the Way of Authority, both in the Way of affectionate Entreaty, and of solemn Charge: For to us, and to every one of us, particularly and personally, are his Words directed, no less than if our Names stood here in Place of Timothy's; hear him, I say, be speaking and addressing each of us by Name, thus, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy Trust; I charge thee therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his appearing, and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long suffering and Doctrine: For the Time will come, when they will not endure sound Doctrine, &c. 2 Tim. iv. 1, — 3. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, that thou observe these Things, — 1 Tim. v. 21. I give thee Charge in the Sight of God, who quickeneth all Things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep this Commandment (that is not any particular Precept, but the whole Trust?) without Spot, unrebukable, until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus, 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14.*

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Keep the Mystery of the Doctrine of Christ, keep the Institutions of Christ, and his holy Commandments; keep them, as has been said, get the Possession of them, dispense them, exemplify them in yourselves, maintain and defend them, suffer for them, commit them for safe Transmission to faithful Men: Let us keep them in our Heads, in our Hearts, in our Lips, in our Lives, "in the World, in the holy Scriptures, and in our precious Standards;" let us keep them in Opposition to Losing, Fraud, Violence, Sale or contemptuous rejecting. Keep the Trust as it is Christ's Trust; keep it as it is the Trust of this Church; her pleasant Heritage bestowed on her by her Husband Christ, and handed down from her Ancestors, and now lodged, trusted into our Hands as Guardians, Trustees, to be preserved and maintained for her and her Posterity, yet unborn.

Our Fore-fathers acted the Part of wise Men; they knew their own true Interest, and took the Holy Ghost's Advice: They bought the Truth, without grudging the Price; and having got Possession of the Purchase, they would by no Means, nor for any Price, be induced to sell it again: Though many a Time, for the Sake of it, they were by our Apostate Princes, Nobles, Parliaments, Churchmen, no better treated than was Naboth, refusing to sell his Father's Inheritance, by Ahab, yet would they not, on the Terms of Parting with the Trust, the Heritage of Gospel Truth and Institutions, redeem their worldly Possessions, their Liberty nor their Lives: By which Means, blessed be the Lord, the Inheritance came safe our Length: For, though often the Edomites and the Amalekites (the Malignants and Papists I mean) said, *Come, let us cut them off* from being a Nation, that the Name of Israel may no more be in Remembrance: Let us take to ourselves the Houses of God in Possession. Yet was Zion made a burdensome Stone, a Cup of trembling to them, and they forced to vomit all up again. A Testimony of which, is our assembling here this Day.

\* Let us therefore keep the Trust, in Opposition to Popery, that old Enemy: Ah! the Beast's Wound is again like to be healed in our Land? Why is the Government so easy and remiss? Why does not the Church bestir herself more in this Matter? † Let us keep the Trust, in Opposi-

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tion to Arminian and Pelagian Errors: In Opposition to Neonomianism or Baxterianism; in Opposition to Prelacy and English Popish Ceremonies, and all Corruptions of divine Ordinances: In Opposition to Quakerism, for I do not hear it is on the Decline, in and about this Place: In Opposition to Erastian Encroachments on the Church's Power, for it is Christ's Power and Prerogative royal; "and the smallest Point of Christ's Prerogative royal (says the renowned Mr. Livingstoun, once the Ornament and Honour of this Synod, in his Letter to the Parish of Ancrum) is not only worth the Sufferings, but worth more than the eternal Salvation of the Elect:" And it has been observed, the Church was never readier to lose Ground than under an indulgent Prince: In Opposition to Arianism, lately sprung up, and spreading apace in England and Ireland, among all Ranks of Persons, even among Ministers too, not only of the Church, but of the Dissenters, our Brethren; and what Ground have we to think we shall be safe? \* Especially since no due Testimony has been given against it, by either Church or State; † "though several Persons in England, and particularly Mr. Waterland, have done excellent Service against it, by their Writings, for which they are to be had in Honour." And in Opposition to Antinomianism too, why not? As there is just Occasion and Ground of Fear; || though I know of no Ministers in this Church, who have given just Ground for Suspicions of that Sort: \* And to load any Men, "who have learned to unite Obedience to Orthodoxy, who preach Duty as well as Grace, and who are always ready to espouse the Precepts of the Gospel with the same Zeal as they do the Doctrines of it, to load such, I say," with being Enemies to Holiness, and other odious Names, for no other Reason but because they cannot consent to be brought under a Covenant of Works, or think of obtaining any Thing at God's Hand by their own Works, is such a Reproach as, I am fully satisfied, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost will reckon themselves Fellow-Sharers in, and Sufferers under. † Keep the Trust in Judicatories, as well as in other Instances; "acting therein with Singleness, as in the Sight of God, with an Eye to the Day of Accounts, and in a Dependence on the promised Spirit and Presence: Let us beware of Fac-

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tion and Party, or the doing of any Thing through Emulation, Strife or Vain-Glory, which evidences equally a weakness of Grace, and littleness or meanness of Soul: These being the Courts of Christ, all Things should be managed in them according to his Instructions, with an Eye to his Glory, to his Approbation, and for the promoting of his Interests in the World: There, ought we to show ourselves zealous for his Honour, and tender of his Interests. Scarce is there a Servant of Men, but he will stand up courageous for his Master's Interest, and Honour, and shall the Servants of Christ be the only Cowards? A vigorous and wise Exercise of Discipline is among the hardest Pieces of our Work, but most necessary for the Sake of the Trust, and of the Souls of Men. Let us then act there with all Faithfulness, holy Freedom and Impartiality, as seeking not to please Men but God, who searches the Hearts; not only allowing, but encouraging others to do the like, and as we do so, shall the Presence of God be with us. But to conclude this." let us take heed to ourselves, and to all the Flock, Acts xx. 28. Let us take heed to ourselves and our Doctrine, 1 Tim. iv. 16. *Say to Archippus, take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it,* Col. iv. 17. For Motives, consider these few;

First, This Trust is both committed to us, and accepted by us. As it is the Stewardship of Heaven's Treasure, of Christ's unsearchable Riches, our Lord and the Holy Ghost, have committed the same to us: As it is Scotland's Reformation and Heritage, it is committed by the Church of Believers in this Land. And under both Considerations it is accepted by Ministers; therefore are we bound by all Manner of Ties, having so bound ourselves, to keep it: And without we endeavour to do it faithfully, we must of Necessity fall under the black and indelible Brand of the worst of Dishonesty, Disingenuity, Hypocrisy, Ingratitude, and Treachery."

Secondly, Consider, That consequentially and really, it is the Charge and the Keeping, 1. Of the Father and of Christ's declarative Glory, which is displayed and shines with a peculiar and an amazing Brightness in the Gospel. "So that to betray the Trust, is, in Effect, to rob God, and to betray Christ, in what is dearest to him:" The Trust being corrupted, the Glory of God in the Face of  
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Jesus Christ, is by so much eclipsed and darkened; a Death's Vail is drawn over Christ's beautiful Face, that Men can no more behold it, 2 Cor. iv. 5. and he is defrauded, as he was by the unfaithful Husbandmen, of the Revenue of Glory due unto him. 2. The keeping or not keeping of it, is really the keeping or betraying of the Souls of Men: For, the Gospel being as a new Ship, God has put to Sea, for saving the Ship-wrecked Children of Adam; when the Trust is vitiate "in any Fundamental Instance, a Leak is sprung, or rather" the Bottom is struck out of the Vessel; in which Case all must go the Lake together; since, in Heaven nor Earth, besides what is provided in the Gospel, there is no Help for lost Sinners: And to be accessary to the Destruction, not only of a present, but of succeeding Generations, one knows not how many, ought to be a very shocking Thought. *My People*, says the Lord, *are destroyed for lack of Knowledge.* 2. The keeping, or not keeping of it, is, in Effect, the keeping or the losing of their own Souls too. "But these having been touched on before, consider in the next place."

Thirdly, The Hazard the Trust is in at this Day. It is never, it is true, quite out of Hazard from Devils or Men; but my Reason for thinking it in Hazard more than ordinary at this Day, are, 1. Because a barren, fruitless Profession of the Gospel is oftentimes punished with Apostacy from the Truth. Such who forsake the Lord, by giving up themselves to an ungodly, loose, prophane Course of Life, thereby holding the Truth captive in Unrighteousness, he often leaves judicially to err from the Truth too: "And when Men do, under a Profession of the Truth, live in open Rebellion against its Power, is it any Wonder, our Lord," unwilling to suffer his Truth to be any longer prostitute to their Lusts, leave them to make Shipwreck concerning the Faith, and give them up to believe a Lie, 2 Thess. ii. 10. 2 Chron. xv. 2. Now, it is for a Lamentation, that, in our Day, the Glory and Power of Christianity are so far, not only faded, but lost among the most Part of all Ranks of professed Christians, that their Profession is one of the greatest Blots and Dishonour can be cast on the Truth; So that it were better Service done the Gospel, for them, by forsaking of it, to declare the Belief thereof, was inconsistent with their godlets Lives?

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“ The Paths and Prints of the Fruits of the Spirit of Gospel-Faith, to instance, Love, Goodness, Faithfulness, Meekness, Self-denial, Humility, Contempt of the World, Zeal for the Honour of Christ, Readiness for the Cross, are so overgrown and worn out among Men, that it can hardly be discerned where they have been; whereas the Works of the Flesh have a broad beaten Road, that the Multitude travel in. Hence, for any to assert, That the Faith, Profession, Lives and Courses of the Generality of professing Christians, were any tolerable Representation of the Truth and Holiness of the Gospel, would be a notable Affront, yea, a Discovery of Enmity to it: Since the Account the Holy Ghost gives of the Principles, Disposition and Actions of Men in their natural State, and under the Conduct of Satan, is much more applicable to such, than any Thing that is said of the Followers of Christ in Holy Scriptures. And while Religion is not rooted by its Power in the Hearts and Lives of Men, but is maintained merely by an outward unenlivened Profession, and the secular Interest of its Professors, it is in no good Condition to abide, nor can it be expected long to stand the Shock of that Opposition it will be exposed to.” Sometimes Truth is first lost in a Church, and then Holiness. The Spring of it, in that Case, being dried up, and its Root withered. Yea, the very Heathens, we see, Rom. i. 24. — 28. for their rejecting the Notions they had of God’s Being, Attributes and Providence, from the Light of Nature, were judicially given up to all Manner of vile Abominations. Again, oftentimes the Decay and Hatred of Gospel Holiness is the Cause of the Loss of Truth: But where either is rejected, the other will not long remain behind. 2. A Flood of Errors of all Sorts, many of them Damnable, is, with a new Force, broke forth in these Lands, and like to overflow. Arianism, Deism, Atheism, &c. yea, the Aspect of Matters in all the Churches is very “ gloomy ” and threatening at this Day; “ the Leprosy of Error,” the Plague of Defection, seem not to be on the Wane, “ but on the Waxing and Spreading. The reformed Religion is by many so unhinged and taken off from its old Foundations, by their debating and calling in question the principal Articles of it, and by their growing weary of the Truths, not only professed since the Reformation, but that gave

gave Occasions thereto, and without which it had never been attempted; that the Man of Sin needs not despair (without holy Providence mercifully interpose) of imposing his Yoke once more on the Neck of the Protestant Churches. Purity of Doctrine, it is true, has been the Privilege and Blessing of this, beyond many (I may say, any) of her Sister Churches; but we have no Ground to expect it shall ay be so, be our Behaviour and Improvement what they will: And some of her present Circumstances, it is evident, render her Condition more hazardous and susceptible of Infection, than heretofore she wont to be. And further, to say nothing of Luther's Observation, of the Doctrine of the Gospel continuing pure in a Church, at once, not beyond the Space of Man's Life-time; it is plain, in Fact, That no Church or Nation, that ever received the Profession of the Gospel, but sooner or later, in some considerable Degree, if not totally, she fell off from the Doctrine and Obedience of it. It is vain, to think of preserving the Purity of Religion in Confessions and other Standards, though they should remain untouched, while some sow Tares and others Sleep; while some, by their bold and presumptuous Medlings corrupt its Truth; while others, through Negligence, the Love of Ease, or other Bialses, overlook all; and few make it their Business to preserve and express its Power \*." It is known, that of late Years, a Root of Bitterness sprung up among ourselves, which being, in a place of stubbing up, but tenderly crompt, its Growth and Spreading has thereby been promoted.

3. The Trust suffered by early Neglects and Omissions, after the Lord wrought our great Deliverance at the Revolution, and there is daily less Appearance how they shall be got mended \*. The Abominations, Defections and Apostacy of former Times, were never thoroughly searched, honestly confest and mourned for †: Returning to the Lord by the same Road we had gone away "from Him" was not thought needful or convenient then; a more convenient Time was expected, but in vain, now these Thirty Years bygone \*. Our Covenants, "by Means of which, this Land particularly, had often been solemnly married to the Lord; by Means of which,

See

\* Sland. 3. †

\* Sland. 4. †

\* Sland. †

Scotland's Reformation had been, with signal Countenance and Blessing from Heaven, carried on in all the Periods of this Church: our Covenants with our God, I say," though broken, rescinded, condemned and burnt with all Circumstances of Ignominy and Reproach, "and the owning of them made capital and treasonable (some of which wicked Laws, unto this Day, stand unrepealed") have never been renewed: ("though never had Church or Nation whatsoever, in regard of their universal, sudden, solemn, bold and Heaven-daring Apostacy from the Lord their God, more Reason and Need to have returned to him after this Sort") because the civil Government did not bind us, nor give their Consent unsought; a Thing was never to be expected of carnal Men, and, many of them, known Enemies to Christ and his Interests. "In all which, I mean no Reflection on the Memories of the worthy Men, whether in Church or in State, that are gone; for, some, I know, then of all Ranks had it in their Hearts to have taken this Step for building the House of the Lord; tho' being in Doubt if the Time was yet come, and fearing the Sons of Zeruiah would be too strong for them, their Courage failed them: which, were they now alive, they would, I believe, pardon me for saying, it was their Infirmary. For" I can never yet see, if a Church had a good Mind "to return to the Lord, and to take hold of his Covenant, after this Manner; What should hinder them?" What should hinder them? "Sure, Numb. 30. ought not; since herein they are not subject to the Fathers of their Flesh; If the Consent of the Powers of the World, which, with all Humility, and earnestly is to be sought, cannot be obtained, they may, no doubt of it, proceed with it. Our Fore-fathers were, I am sure, of this Mind, who before, and in the Year 1638, without Consent or Concurrence of King or Council, Parliaments of Assemblies, came into solemn Covenant with the Lord their God, and were, tho' mightily opposed by the Powers then in being, owned and defended by him in so doing." If our God is not to be trusted for, more than that, "one should have small Encouragement to venture for him. This Covenanting, or the taking hold of God's Covenant after this Manner, was the Strength and the Glory of Scotland, whereas, her Defections and Neglects this Way, have been, and are, her Weak-



Weakening and her Shame." And let Men please themselves as they will, while this remains undone, I despair of seeing a better of it, but that every Day shall be another's Worse †. I am neither in a Condition to enter on the Particular of former or present Time; nor are there many Auditors of this Sort in a Condition to bear it: But when God comes to plead his Controversy with Scotland, he will cause Nobles, Gentry, Ministers, and all Ranks of Persons, both hear and acknowledge Things they would take very hainously to hear of now \*. I shall only say, I am sure Scotland's Reformation has not thriven or grown much in our Hands †.

4. Zeal for Christ and his Interests, is mightily on the Decline, among all Ranks of Persons. Never was that Word more applicable to any Generation, than it is to us, Phil. ii. 21. *All seek their own, not the Things that are Jesus Christ's.* And Jer. v. 1. — 5. and ix. 3. — Isa. lix. Most Men are become very easy and indifferent about Principles, "ever the most important and Fundamental; it being a light Matter with them, whether they stand or fall in the Streets" It is true, none almost but they have a Zeal on some Occasions; but as the Prophet expresses it, *They are not valiant for the Truth upon the Earth:* And this will be still further increased, by our Gentry and Nobility affecting an English Education to their Children, whereby they cannot fail of being poisoned in their Principles about Religion; which is one of the four Fruits of the unblest, because, in some material and weighty Points, unlawful Match. But then,

5. We are broken and divided among ourselves, by different Practices "and different Sentiments;" by Jealousies, Suspensions, Emulations, &c. the native Effects of the former. These at such a dangerous Juncture, otherwise mightily unfit for watching the Trust with one Eye, and striving together with one Heart and Shoulder, for the Faith of the Gospel. "When the Tongues are divided, and the Hands engaged in mutual intestine Conflicts, which all united, were few enough for strengthening the Things that remain, and are ready to die; while the Keepers are engaged in mutual charging one of another, with being Occasions of endangering the Trust, no wonder that joint

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Endeavour,

\* *Slav. 5. †*

Endeavours, after proper Remedies and Means of Preservation, be much neglected." And, as if our Condition had not been bad enough before, \* a new Stumbling-block has by some been thrown in the Way of this Church; by Means of which, she is cast into a new intestine Ferment; And, a Thousand to One, but Truth may suffer further, ere it be over. Better a Millstone had been hanged about one's Neck, and be cast into the Depth, than to have been the Cause, or so much as the culpable Occasion of this †.

6. \* Many of these who are looking towards the holy Ministry (I am far from saying all of them; for several I know, are hopeful, and worthy of all Encouragement) are so disposed and affected towards the Science, falsely so called, which falls to be in Vogue in our Day, that there is Ground to fear, if many of the present Ministry were gone off the Stage, the Trust may meet with unskilful and unkindly keeping from them †. The Wisdom of Words is too much studied by some in Preaching, which the Apostle Paul industriously shunned in his Preaching of the Gospel, *Lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none Effect* 1 Cor. i. 17.

Lastly, And is not the Presence of God much withdrawn from his own Ordinances? Ministers are carried through their public Ministrations, which is Ground of Thankfulness: But do we feel that sensible Presence and Assistance with our own Spirits, which makes the Work easy and sweet, our Joy and Delight? And is that Power of the Holy Ghost, as has been usual, observed and felt to go along with the Word, making it effectual for Conversion and Sanctification, for changing the Hearts and Lives of Men?" What though it should be true, that this Church was the purest among the reformed? May not her Condition be bad enough for all that? May she not be so, and yet on the Decline? The Church of the Jews was often in a sorry Condition, tho' they were the only Church God had on Earth. Churches are apt to be pleased with themselves, and to contend all is well with them, while their outward Establishment and Constitution is preserved, while their outward Order and Administrations are inviolate: But it is certain, all these may remain safe and intire, and yet the Power, Glory and Purity of the Gospel be lost; and

\* Sland. 6. †

\* Sland. 12. †

and yet the Trust be quite mismanaged; as it was in the Church of the Jews. Christ's Judgment concerning a Church, we find, is oftentimes very wide from her own, concerning herself. It was not only for her own Sake, but for Warning to us and others in every Age, that it is entered on an everlasting Record: Concerning the Church of Laodicea, That when she judged herself rich, increased in Goods, and wanting nothing, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Amen, the true and faithful Witness, pronounces her poor, blind, wretched and miserable. And it deserves our Consideration, if our Lord may not say of us and other Churches, where his Name is yet owned, what was said of old in Reference to the Jewish Church, Jer. ii. 21.—Isa. i. 21.—Our Lord's earnest Concern and Importunity as to this Matter, having been insisted on before, I shall not adduce it here again, as a distinct Motive: But consider,

4. Ministerial-keeping, as it is the great Mean God has ordained, and which he blesses to this End and Purpose, so it is the Expedient of all others least exceptionable. "Force and Persecution, whoever have used them, have ever been a Stain to Christianity, and, instead of winning People to a cordial Belief and Profession of the Gospel, have never failed to fill their Minds with Alienation from their Profession, by whom they suffered. But a diligent and faithful Dispensation of the Word of the Gospel, an Endeavour to implant the Word in the Souls and Hearts of Men, and to leaven their Minds with a Sense of its Power and Excellency, is what none can complain of, or take Offence at. And rarely has any Church made Defection from the Truth, but where there has first been a Neglect of this Sort; which scarce can fail of opening the Door to Apostacy." Further, This seems to be the only Mean left for preservation of the Truth, in our Day; all other, proving ineffectual to secure People from Apostacy.

5. According to Ministers Faithfulness in keeping of the Trust, so may they expect the divine Presence and Countenance with them, and Success in the Discharge of their Office; without which they can have but little Comfort, whatever Countenance or Approbation they may have from the World, *Go ye—teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am*



with you always, even unto the End of the World, Mat. xxviii. 20. See Jer. i. 8, 19. "If they had stood in my Counsel—then they should have turned them from their evil Way," &c. Jer. xxiii. 22.

6. If we keep the Trust, *the Trust*, or *he whose it is*, will keep us; "Be not afraid, I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord, Jer. i. 8, 19. Notwithstanding, the Lord, stood with me and strengthened me.—And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil Work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly Kingdom,"—2 Tim. iv. 17. Seldom it is seen, that Ministers continuing faithful "and cleaving to what is Duty," fall into Contempt with them who fear the Lord: Yea, often they have a Testimony in the Conscience even of their Enemies. Nor have their Posterity been Losers by their Losses on that Account. That Word, 1 Sam. ii. 30. is made good to the Ministers of every Age, *Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.* Unfaithful Ministers become most contemptible of any Men. *But ye are departed out of the Way, ye have caused many to stumble at the Law—therefore have I made you contemptible and base before all the People,*—Mal. ii. 8, 9.

7. The Trust, well kept, is *the Glory, Strength, and the Safety of a Church*: *Behold I have set before thee an open Door, and no Man can shut it, for thou hast a little Strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name: Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan—to come and worship before my Feet, and to know that I have loved thee,* Rev. iii. 8, 9. The same Promise is made to every Church continuing faithful in this Matter, as well as it was to Philadelphia. While they kept the Testimonies, the Statutes and the Judgments, the Ark was the Glory and the Strength of Israel. Faithful Ministers also, are to a Church as the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof." It is not Laws, Princes, Nobles, so much as the keeping of the Trust, that secures a Church: Though their Countenance is desirable, and a Blessing, when it is sincere, and they indeed nursing Fathers; otherwise the Trust gets much Mischief of them, bringing in especially the carnal, fleshly Wisdom of the World, into the Church, which we have enough among ourselves of.

8. It is a Trust in Order to an Account. And in Case of Unfaithfulness, it will be but a melancholy Reckoning; "the Sin and Danger here is inexpressible; the Blood of Nations, Churches, and whole Generations, will lie much of it at unfaithful Ministers Door; For if they had acted a faithful Part, it might have been a Means to stop them in their self-destroying Courses: And accordingly we find the Lord often, in the Old Testament, charging the Blame of his Peoples Ruin upon them. That is a heavy Word coming from the Mouth of the Lord;—*I have sworn—that the Iniquity of Eli's House shall not be purged with Sacrifice nor Offering for ever,*" 1 Sam. iii. 14. Our Lord is gone into a far Country, and upon his Return we must account for every Sermon we have preached; for our actings in every Synod, Presbytery, General Assembly, &c. Further the false Prophet is spoke of in Scripture, as having a Hell by himself. We may likewise take under this Head, the Peace and Comfort, that Faithfulness in this Matter will yield one in a dying Hour. Paul instances in no particular, but this, *I have kept the Faith,*—2 Tim. iv. 8.—A great Comfort, no doubt then, that he had got the Faith kept; when so many Endeavours had been used by Devils and Men to part him and it. A worthy Minister, in our own Day, when a dying, said, he had sweet Peace then, of these Appearances for which he had often been accounted a Fool. Now to close this Exhortation; for Christ's Sake, whose the Trust is, for the Sake of Mens Souls; for the present and succeeding Generations Sake, and for our own Sake, as ever we expect to finish our Course, and give an Account not with Grief, but with Joy, let us keep the Trust committed to us.

Now, as we would be helped to keep the Trust, according to the Doctrine, there are some Things,

First, That we must beware of; as, 1. We would beware of the World, the Love of it especially. *No Man that warreth, intangleth himself with the Affairs of this Life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a Soldier,* 2 Tim. ii. 4. Riches are dangerous to all, but especially to Ministers: For if they will be rich, they cannot miss to fall into Tentation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men, 1 Tim. vi. 9. It is hard to keep the Trust and the World, both of them,

them, especially at some Times. They will be like two Herds, in the keeping of one Man: While he is tending the one, the other will go wrong, "or, in Hazard from one Thing or other. The Love of Money being the Root of all Evil, no Wonder it have Influence in Order to Defection,"——*which while some have coveted after, they have stred from the Faith,*——*But thou, O Man of God flee these Things,* Ver. 10, 11.

2. Beware of accommodating the Trust to the Lusts of Men. Thus the Doctrine and the Institutions have been corrupted to please Men: \* To obtain their Favour and Countenance to the Profession of Religion, and to keep a Face and an Appearance of it among them; Ministers have been content with whatever they could get, and would not offend by asking more: So one Point of the Trust has been dropt after another.† "King Ahaz falls in Love with an Altar, he saw it at Damascus, sends the Pattern of it to Urijah the Priest, who accordingly built it for the King, against he came home, 2 Kings xvi. 20.——The Arguments that were made Use of at the infamous Assembly of Perth for enacting the five Articles, viz It is the King's Pleasure, what! Will ye disobey the King? &c. need not be forgot.

3. Beware of falling out about the Trust. If one shall say, this belongs to the Trust, and another says, nay, it does not: It will in such an Event, be in great Hazard of being mismanaged. "If to instance, after so long preaching of Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Believer's Freedom from the Law, as a Covenant, we should happen to fall out among ourselves, about the Nature of the one or the other. Ah! what a grievous Scandal would be laid in the Way of Sinners, yea, and of weak Saints too? Division of Tongues, is more beseeming the Builders of Babel, than of Jerusalem. A Kingdom divided against itself, hastens to meet its own Ruin. For the Divisions of Reuben, are great Thoughts of Heart. Yet are such Things no other, than what have been, no other than what were foretold by our Lord, in the New Testament." But, *We unto the World, because of Offences,* for it must needs be, that Offences come: *But wo to that Man, by whom the Offences cometh,* Mat. xviii. 7.

\* Stand. 7. †



4. We must beware of making nothing of little Things. "Christ's small Things (if any Thing that is his, may be so termed) are great Things. And the Word may be very clear in these small Things. We are to kyth our Love and our Respect to our Master's Honour and Authority, in these: And the Servant who is faithful in a very little, shall be made Ruler over much. Further, small Things admitted wanting a Warrant, may be like the Needle, which though it makes but a small Hole brings a long Thread after it, Things may appear small in themselves, and yet be great and disinal in their Consequences. "Mr. Livingstoun abovementioned, in his Discourse to his Parish, on Monday after his last Communion, October 1662, says, There was never a Trial yet in the Church but in the Time of it, it was brought to a seemingly small Thing,—— And that Satan can put the Trial in such a Frame, he can draw it to such a Point, and set it, as they say, in *ancient Novacula*, like a Razor's Edge: yet still, though there seems but little between the Two, the one Side is a denying of Christ, and the other a confessing of him.

5. We are to beware of Errors in Vision,——*They err in Vision, they stumble in Judgment, Isa. xxviii. 7.—— They make you vain; they speak a Vision of their own Hearts, and not of the Mouth of the Lord.* They say, &c. Jer. xxiii. 16, 17. Thy Prophets have seen vain and foolish Things for thee, they have not discovered thine Iniquity, to turn away thy Captivity, &c. Lam. ii. 14. It will be but a poor Excuse for a Minister to say, I have thought so, and no other than what rank Persecutors may plead. For in killing of the Saints, they thought they were doing God Service, John xvi. 2. Lastly, We must beware of carnal, fleshly Wisdom. but of this before.

Secondly, If we would keep the Trust, as has been said, there are some Things we must attend unto, and be careful of. As.

2. To get a spiritual Acquaintance with, and inward Experience of the Trust, on our Souls. "Not a notional Scheme only in our Heads, but such a certain assured Knowledge of it, in its Grounds, Efficacy and native Evidence, as the Scripture calls *a full Assurance of Understanding*; such a Persuasion and Assurance of the Truths of the Gospel, as will be prevalent and remain firm against all that Opposition

Opposition and Tentation, Power and Policy, we may be assaulted with; and such as will not suffer our Minds to be indifferent, careless or negligent about them: It is true, we can come at this, neither by natural Sense, nor by rational Demonstration, but only by the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. ii. 10,—14. giving us spiritual Views of the Things themselves, in their heavenly Nature, matchless Glory and Excellency, and giving us an Experience of their Reality, Power and Efficacy on our Minds, Affections and whole Souls. All which though it be the Grace, Promise and Gift of God, we are to endeavour after, in a Way of Duty; praying earnestly for the Spirit of Truth, to lead us into all Truth, and to make us learn the Truth as it is in Jesus." Without this, doctrinal Knowledge, and Notions of the Truth, enabling us to talk and dispute of them, will never secure our Stedfastness, in a Day of Trial, nor enable us to keep the Trust in all Circumstances we may fall into. For in all Ages, Men, so learned and skilled in the Doctrine of the Gospel, that they seemed Rabbis in Israel, Pillars in the Church, have not only fallen in a Day of Trial, "but led others the Way in Apostacy (which the Faith of some has been overthrown, and the Confidence of others much shaken by) while Saints of the lowest Stature have been Martyrs for the Truth: Which is easily accounted for from what we have been saying, namely, the Latter received the Love and the Power of the Truth, whereas the Former received only the Notion of it. Particularly, we would study the Knowledge of Christ, and of him crucified, seeking to have spiritual Views of the Glory of his Person, his Offices, his Undertaking, his Fulness; and, to have Experience of the sweet Power and Efficacy of his Grace and Spirit. That Word deserves our particular Notice, *But when it pleased God—to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him, &c.* Gal. i. 16.

2. To make the keeping of the Trust, the *Study and Business of our Lives*, 1 Tim. iv. 15. and v. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 5.

3. To hold by the Form of sound Words, the Words of the Holy Ghost, or Words of a like plain Meaning and Import. "For fitter and emphatical Terms and Phrases, to express divine Things by, there are none, than what the Holy Ghost uses, and has taught us to use: For the Scripture is not only the Rule of what we are to believe and practise,

practise, but also of our Expressions about holy Things : Which therefore we are to declare, *not in Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. Scripture Words I mean, or such as are equivalent to them, as before, especially the Words of orthodox Standards. For, not only were the Things revealed to the Prophets and Apostles, but the very Words suggested, by which they were to express them : Therefore, in keeping of the Trust, a very particular Regard must be paid to the wholesome Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Tim. vi. 3. When in unfolding the Mysteries of Faith, Scripture Words and Phrases are declined, much more when others dissonant thereto, or inconsistent therewith, are made Use of, it falls without Doubt, under the Head of that *Eterodidascalia*, which the Apostle is so keen against, 1 Tim. i. 3. and vi. 3. as well as when other Doctrines themselves are taught. It is made the Character of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, to be nourished up in the *Words of Faith and sound Doctrine*, 1 Tim. iv. 6. Divine Things require a Rhetoric proper and peculiar to themselves : And as it is only from the Scripture we can be supplied with the glorious Ideas of the Things themselves, so it alone can best furnish us with Eloquence, and all other proper Ornaments of Speech, to beautify and declare them. Now, the Words of the Holy Ghost being a divine Ordinance, for the Preservation of the Trust, let them be once but changed, as said is, and it shall not be possible for the Wit of Man to keep the Trust, in the Sense of the Text, but nill they, will they, it shall be corrupted, and at length betrayed. See also 2 Tim. i. 13. Tit. i. 9, 13. and ii. 1, 2, 7, 8. And, for the same Reason, ought all such technical Terms, as Affectation and Design, not Necessity, or Usefulness, have introduced into Divinity, to be avoided and thrown forth again.\* I see it now taught, that Believers are under the co-active and compulsive Power of the Law ; a Way of speaking, directly contrary to what has hitherto been in Use among orthodox Protestants, using these Terms, who with one Lip, have taught Believers were not under the co-active and compulsive Power of the Law† : It may be worth some Body's While, to inquire which of the two Ways of speaking, is most agreeable to, or dissonant from the Words

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\* Stand. 9. †



of the Holy Ghost; to which Purpose, the following Texts, among many others, may be considered, Luke i. 74. Rom. viii. 15."

4. To keep the Trust with the most Diligence, Watchfulness and Earnestness, where it is most attacked or exposed to the greatest Danger. This, we find, was our Lord's, the Prophets and Apostles Way, and particularly Paul's: And it is evident from the Parity of Reason in other Cases, it ought to be so. Livingstone, in the above-mentioned Discourse, says, There are Times and Seasons, when a Man's Silence may bring a Curse upon his Head. And speaking of sicker Men, waving ay the Controversy of the Day; who, when Prelacy is the Controversy, will preach against Popery, and when Popery is the Controversy, will preach good Moral Doctrine, Love to God and to our Neighbour, he says, How shall such an one look for a blyth Sight of Christ, on a Death-bed; or, when his Master will say to him, Ha Sir, I know you well enough, you spake, but never in a Mifter; you spake, as they say, when none speired at you, you was stout then, but when my Cause came in Hand, and when you might have done me good Service, by bearing up my Banner, when it was like to fall, you would not. Therefore get you gone, &c. It was an Evidence of much holy Courage and Faithfulness in that great Man of God, and shining Light in this Church, Mr. Robert Blair, called on a Time to preach at a Triennial Visitation in the North of Ireland, to preach direct and flat against Prelacy and Lord Bishops in the Church: and yet, tho' there were Bishops present, (Usher himself, was not present) such was their Temper, one Word was not said to him for it.

5. To keep the Trust in a good Conscience, if we would keep it fast and safe. *Holding the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience*, 1 Tim. iii. 9. To this Purpose. Paul exercised himself to have always a Conscience void of Offence, &c. Acts xxiv. 17. If a Man make once a Gap in his Conscience, especially by sinning against Light, or doing any Thing doubtfully, with Reverence to the Trust, a Thousand to One, without it be speedily healed, with an Application to the Blood of Christ, but he loses the Trust out of it, in Whole, or in Part, *Holding Faith and*  
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a good Conscience, which some having put away, concerning Faith, have made Shipwreck, 1 Tim. i. 9.

6. \* To eye the Recompence of Reward †, Heb. xi. 26.  
 “ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, &c. 1 Pet. v. 4. Be thou faithful to the Death, &c. Rev. ii. 10.  
 Though our Obedience ought to be free, not servile or mercenary, though we be not to eye Glory as a Wages of our Work of Obedience (the Reward is all of Christ's winning, none of it ours) yet ought we to Eye it, and be encouraged in our Work. \* It seems much safer and agreeable to Scripture, to fetch Arguments to quicken us in our Obedience, from the Mercies of God bestowed already, or \* made sure to Faith in the Covenant and the Promises, than to fetch them from the Blessings we are to gain by our Obedience †, See, to this Purpose, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Col. iii. 23. Heb. x. 34. 2 Cor. iv. 18. It is called a Reward, mainly because it is bestowed, not till the Work is over. \* Yea, though a Believer is never to fear Hell, as what can eventually befall him †, yet is he \*, though he cannot do it without Horror †, to consider it, \* and to consider it, as what was his Due, and as what his Sin deserve, if God without Respect to Christ's being made a Curse for us, was to proceed against him, according to the Tenor of a Law-Covenant; he is thus to consider it, I say, and be filled with Admiration of Free-grace, that has delivered him †, and with the highest Measure of Love and Gratitude, in order to his running the Way of God's Commandments.”

Lastly, To exercise ourselves unto Godliness, 1 Tim. iv. 7. to be much in Prayer, putting it, and ourselves into the Hands of the Keeper of Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps; (it was the saying of a good and learned Man, That he got more Knowledge of divine Things by Prayer, than by all his Study) to be much in the Exercise of Faith on Christ and the Promises, to be strong in the Grace that is, not in us, but in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. ii. 1.

“ Here an Application, anent keeping of the Trust, might be made also unto the People; For, though this Text speaks to Ministers particularly, yet are they like-

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\* Quest. 9. †      \* Rem. 12.      \* Quest. 7. 8. †  
 \* Quest. 10. †      \* Quest. 11. †      \* Quest. 12. †

wife elsewhere in the Scripture required to keep the Trust : And not only for their own Parts to keep it, but in their several Stations and Capacities, to be Helpers and Fellow-Labourers with Ministers in this weighty Work, Rom. xvi. 2 Cor. xvi. 16. Phil. iv. 3. giving them all the Support and Encouragement, in this their Warfare, they can; and bearing, not only patiently, but thankfully, their Faithfulness and plain Dealing, as knowing and considering, they watch a glorious and most important Trust, and likewise for their Souls, as they that must give an Account, with Joy, or with Grief, Heb. xiii. 17. according to their Peoples Entertainment of the Trust at their Hands, and their Deportment, in this whole Affair.

Magistrates, particularly, and Courts of Judicature, both Supreme and Subordinate, together with Persons of Eminence in the World, are highly concerned to approve themselves Nursing Fathers, with Reference unto the Trust, by laying out themselves, by Authority and Example, all they can for the Preservation of it, and for the inabling of Ministers, with Comfort and Success, to discharge their Duty this Way; For, if they, whether by Connivance or by legal Deeds, shall tolerate all the Baggage of Hell, Heresy, Error and Vice, I mean, to have Shade under their Wings, then do they, though not directly, yet really, and, in Effect, consent and concur to the Betraying of the Trust. But these, having insisted so much already, I pass without saying more of them.

May the Lord arise and have Mercy upon Zion, and the Time, *even the set Time to favour her come*, Psal. cii. 13. Now, to Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and for ever. Amen, Jude 24, 25.

For me to have taken so much Time before an Auditory, where it better becomes me to be a Learner, than to have been in the Place of a Teacher; and for me to have spoke several Things more freely, perhaps, than some will reckon was fit and convenient, will, no doubt, if it was viewed in the Glass of our own Wisdom, appear presumptuous, self-conceited, arrogant, and what not: But it will, I hope, when viewed in the Glass of the Text appear more pardonable.



An INDEX of the Remarks, Questions and Slanders; for the Ease and Satisfaction of the curious Reader, That he may turn to them in Order.

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*This is a true Copy of my Notes from which the Synod Sermon was preached; a faithful Transcript of which Notes, with the Additions and Enlargements, distinctly marked as here, was given in to a Committee of the Synod of Mers and Teviotdale by me,*

GAB. WILSON.

AS the Reverend Author of the foregoing Sermon, was one of those Ministers, who bore Testimony against the General Assembly's Conduct in condemning a Book intituled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*; it is judged proper to reprint the following Protestation, wherein he was particularly concerned.

*The*

*The PROTESTATION of several Ministers of the Gospel, against the General Assembly's illegal Proceedings, upon the Head of Doctrine; Given in to the General Assembly, met at Edinburgh, May, 1722.*

THE General Assembly 1720, having by their Fifth Act, intituled, *Act concerning a Book, intituled, The Marrow of Modern Divinity*; through an Oversight, as we conceived, injured several precious Gospel Truths: And in their Eighth Act, intituled, *Act for preaching Catechetical Doctrine*, with Directions therein, proponed Two Heads of Doctrine, in such manner of Expression, as in the Situation of Affairs, caused by the said Fifth Act, was stumbling to us. We found ourselves obliged, for the Regard we owe to the Honour of God, and to his precious Truths, and for the Exoneration of our own Consciences, to give it in unto the late Assembly's Committee of Bills, a Representation and Petition to that Assembly, against the said Fifth Act, and some Things stumbling to us in the Eighth Act aforesaid; therein intimating, That there were several other Grievances, important in themselves, and weighty to us; the which, nevertheless, for Brevity's sake, and the uncommon Weight of the Matter aforesaid, we were constrained to omit the representing of, at that Time. The which Representation and Petition, being transmitted by the Committee, above-mentioned, to the late General Assembly, they did refer the Affair to their Commission, to prepare and ripen it for this Assembly; and forasmuch as we did, in a regular and orderly Way, give in our Representation and Petition aforesaid, and having attended the several Meetings of the Commission, since the last Assembly, and contrary to our Inclinations, answered their Queries, tending to widen the Differences, and put to us by them, even after they had past an Overture, and therein made Determinations upon the several Heads of our Representation. We have, in the same orderly Manner, prosecuted our said Representation and Petition, before the reverend Commission, and this venerable Assembly; and that instead of obtaining Redress, after the Affair had been so long under Deliberation, by the Sentence of the General Assembly, intimated to

( 100 )

us, our Representation and Petition, for repealing of the said Fifth Act of Assembly 1720, is refused; and the said Act is confirmed, and no sufficient Remedy provided, for removing of the Offence given by the Eighth Act aforesaid; which gives us too much Ground to think, that our moving in this Manner, for the Redress of our other Grievances, will be in vain: Therefore, we do, for the Truth's sake, and our necessary Vindication, declare and profess, before this venerable Assembly, That we adhere to our Standard of Doctrine in this Church, to the Confession of Faith, ratified in Parliament, *Anno* 1560, and the National Covenant, or Confession of Faith; both which, we conceive, we are bound to, by the superadded Tye of the Solemn League and Covenant: As also, to the Westminster Confession, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms; and that we are willing to subscribe the Three Confessions aforesaid, as the Confession of our Faith, and particularly, the Westminster Confession, as it was received by this Church, *Anno* 1647. And further, for Reasons contained in our Representation, and Answers to the Commission's Queries; both which we adhere unto, and for other Reasons to be added, if need be, We do protest, That we look upon the said Fifth Act of Assembly 1720, as contrary to the Word of God, and to the aforesaid Standard of Doctrine and Covenants, and on what we have complained of, in the fore said Eighth Act, as of dangerous Consequence thereto; that therefore we dare not, any manner of Way, no not by Silence, consent unto, or approve of them, nor the Acts of this Assembly relative thereunto: And that it shall be lawful for us, agreeable to the Word of God, and Standards of Doctrine aforesaid in this Church, to adhere, to profess, preach, and still bear Testimony unto the Truths condemned, or otherways injured by the said Acts of Assembly; notwithstanding of the said Acts, or whatsoever shall follow thereupon. Upon all which, we take Instruments, and crave Extracts,

*At Edinburgh, May 21st, 1722. Subscribed by*

Messrs. James Hog, at Carnock.  
William Hunter, at Lilliesleaf.  
Thomas Boston, at Etterick.  
John Williamson, at Innerask,  
Ebenezer Erskine, at Portmoak.  
James Kid, at Queensferry.

Gabriel Wilson, at Maxton.  
Ralph Erskine, and James Wardlaw,  
at Dunfermling.  
Henry Davidson, at Gallashiels.  
James Bathgate, at Orwell.

F I N I S.



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